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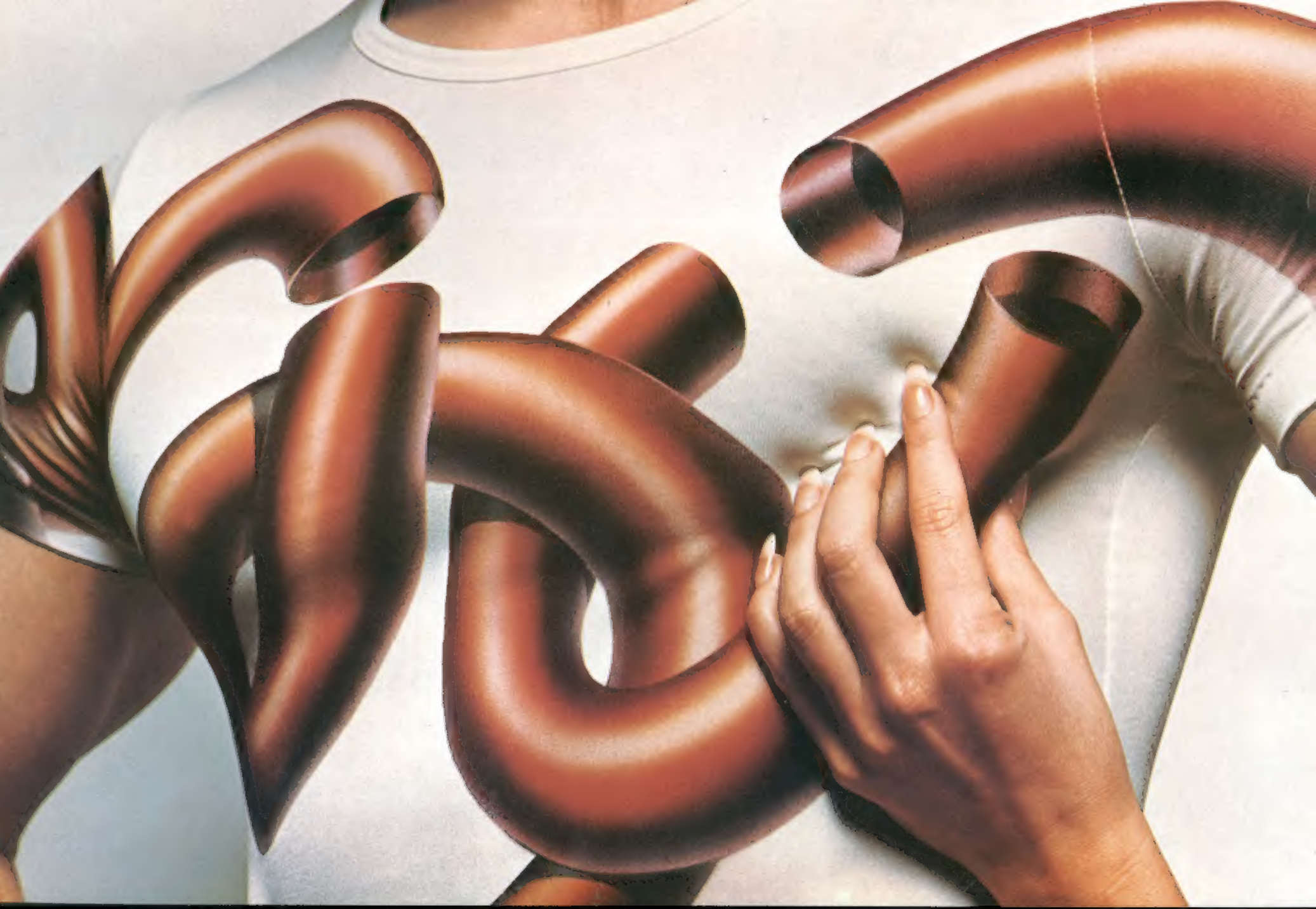
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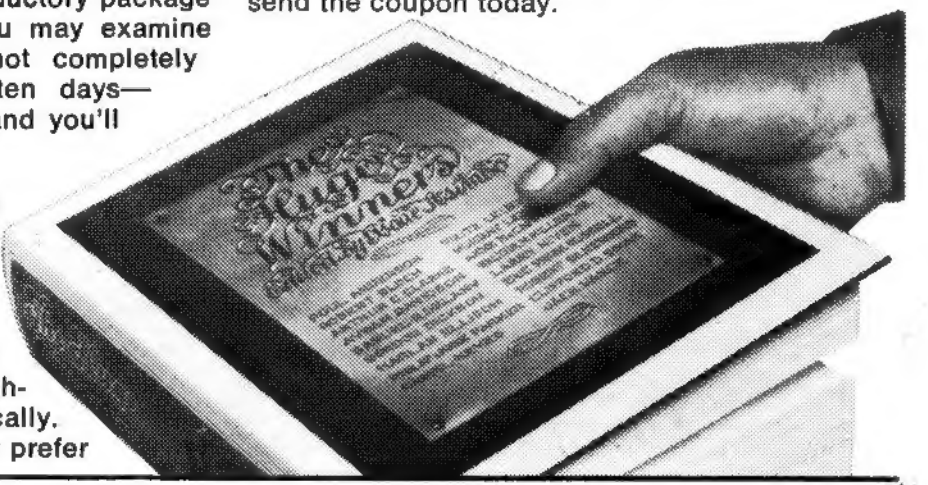

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ORIGINS

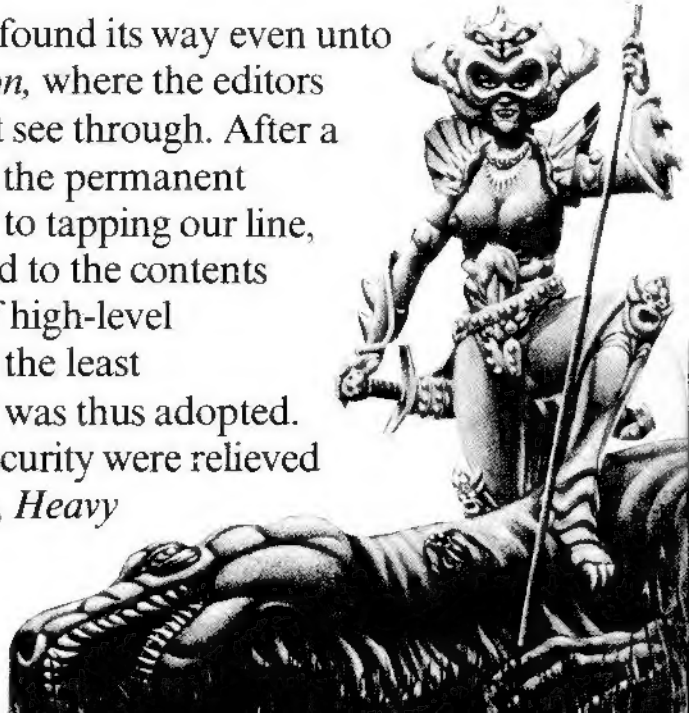
At 4 A.M. on the nineteenth of December, 1974, under the mad marksman's eye of the archer in the sky, on the feast of Bishop Nicasius, who prophesied the arrival of the barbarians who beheaded him, observed by whoknows how many orbiting whatnots, a linkless foursome previously identified as Druillet, Dionnet, Moebius, and Farkas were transformed into the Associated Humanoids. Shortly thereafter, a magazine entitled *Metal Hurlant* materialized on newsstands. *Metal Hurlant* means "screaming metal" — whatever that means. It was, and still is, issued by the Associated Humanoids. The magazine appears to be the work of an alien intelligence, as indeed it is.

It is French.

French is a difficult language to understand because of the large number of English words in it. Thus, when the French say "science fiction," they are not, as you might think, referring to H.G. Wells or "Star Trek" or even Jules Verne. "Science fiction" is a term which can sufficiently define Big Macs, South America, Methodism, or a weird neighbor. *Vogue Magazine*, anything Belgian, and pop-top cans are certainly science fiction. The Humanoid "Moebius," writing in *Metal Hurlant*, describes how, while listening to a Johnny Cash album, he realized that science fiction is a cathedral. Are you beginning, dear reader, to sufficiently misunderstand?

And lo, it came to pass that *Metal Hurlant* found its way even unto the New York offices of the *National Lampoon*, where the editors sit around hoping to see something they can't see through. After a series of transatlantic phone calls resulting in the permanent hospitalization of the FBI operative assigned to tapping our line, it was agreed that America should be exposed to the contents of *Metal Hurlant* for its own good. A series of high-level conferences concluded that *Heavy Metal* was the least comprehensible title for the magazine, and it was thus adopted. Certain American artists famous for their obscurity were relieved of their manuscripts, and now, as you can see, *Heavy Metal #1* has been published.

And the rest is science fiction.



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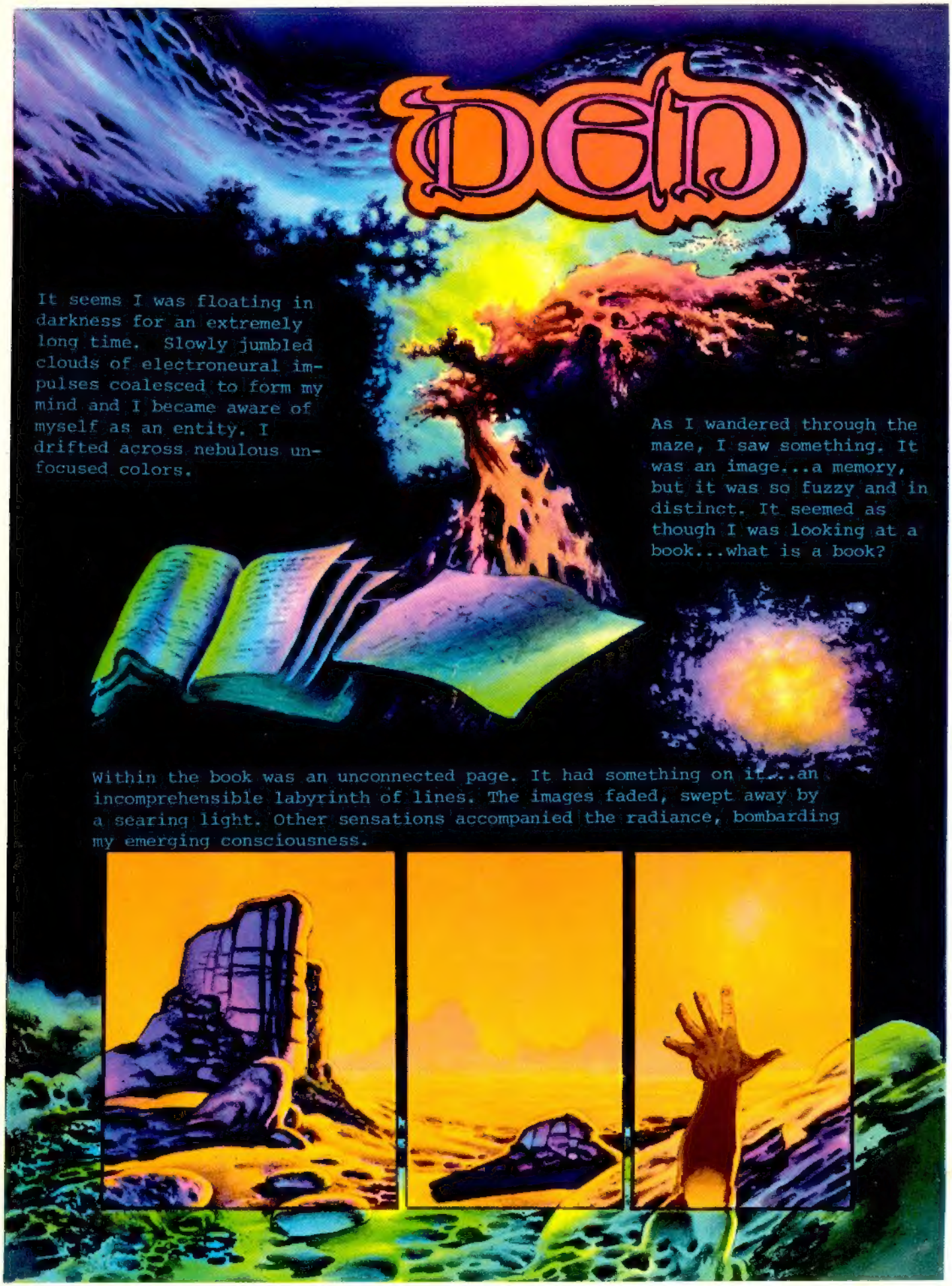
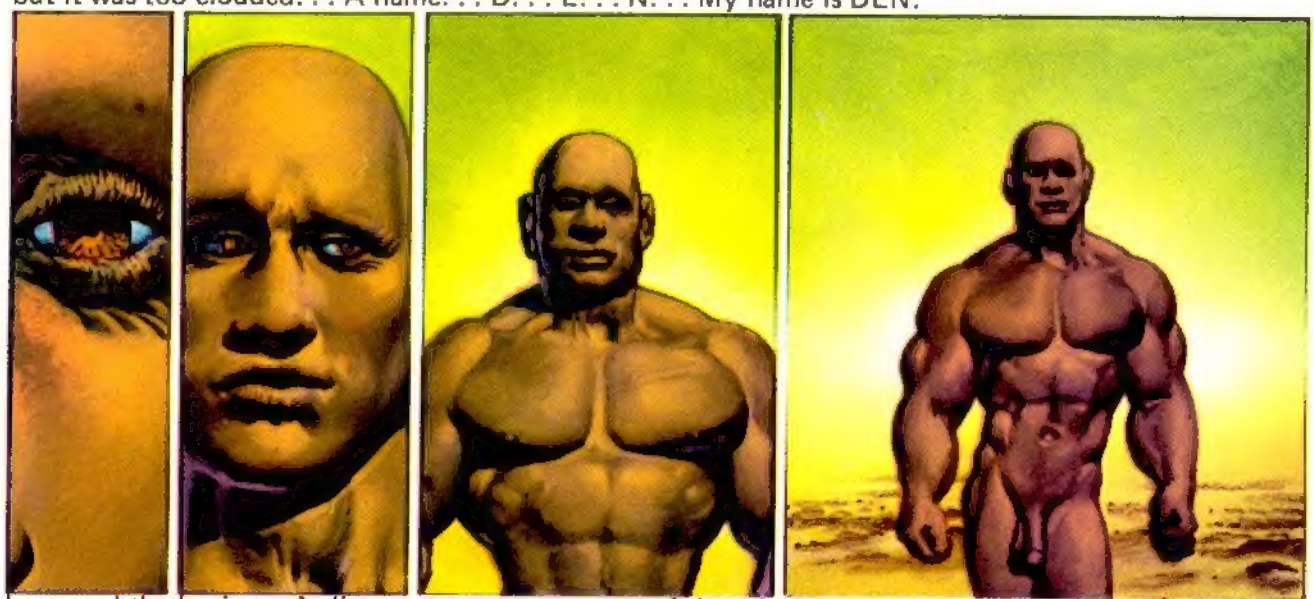
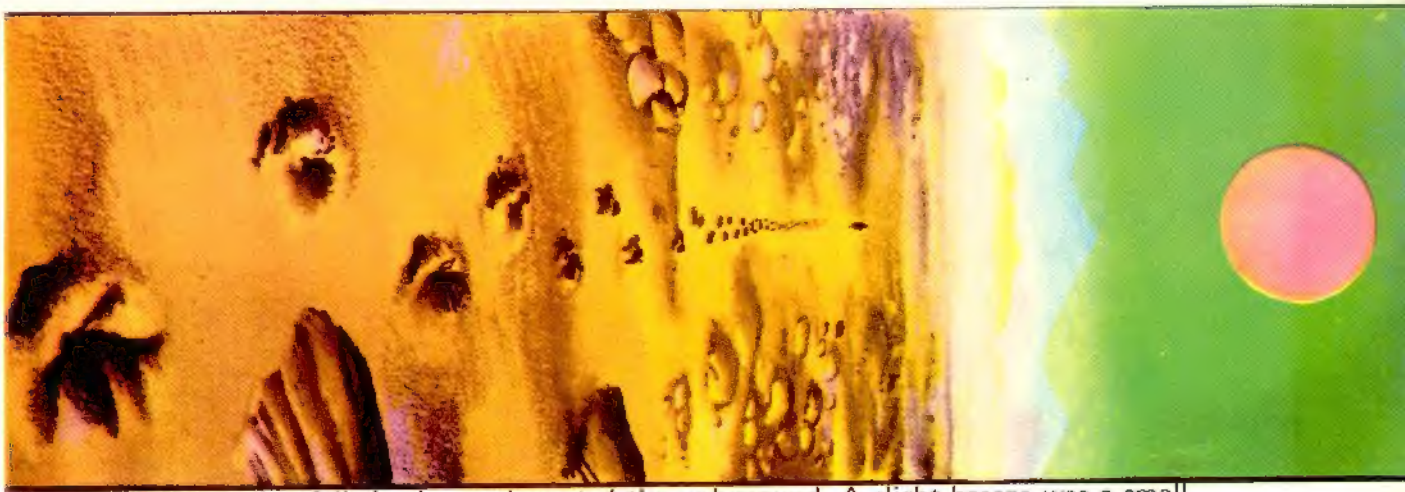

DEN
It seems I was floating in darkness for an extremely long time. Slowly jumbled clouds of electroneural impulses coalesced to form my mind and I became aware of myself as an entity. I drifted across nebulous unfocused colors.
As I wandered through the maze, I saw something. It was an image...a memory, but it was so fuzzy and in distinct. It seemed as though I was looking at a book...what is a book?
Within the book was an unconnected page. It had something on it...an incomprehensible labyrinth of lines. The images faded, swept away by a searing light. Other sensations accompanied the radiance, bombarding my emerging consciousness.

Who was I? Where was I?. . . The landscape was totally unknown to me, even my body was unfamiliar.

What forces brought me here? I searched my mind for memories. . . There was something there, but it was too clouded. . . A name. . . D. . . E. . . N. . . My name is DEN.



I scanned the horizon. A distant structure rose out of the mists. I decided to go there. Perhaps it held a clue to the mystery.



I walked. My bare footfalls in the sand created the only sound. A slight breeze was a small relief in the heat.

After several hours existence in this desolate land. . .

. . .I was overtaken by a vacuous feeling . . .HUNGER.

—FOOD!!

There were instincts, reflexes and a good amount of muscular dexterity contained in this body in which I found myself. I was thankful but still confused.

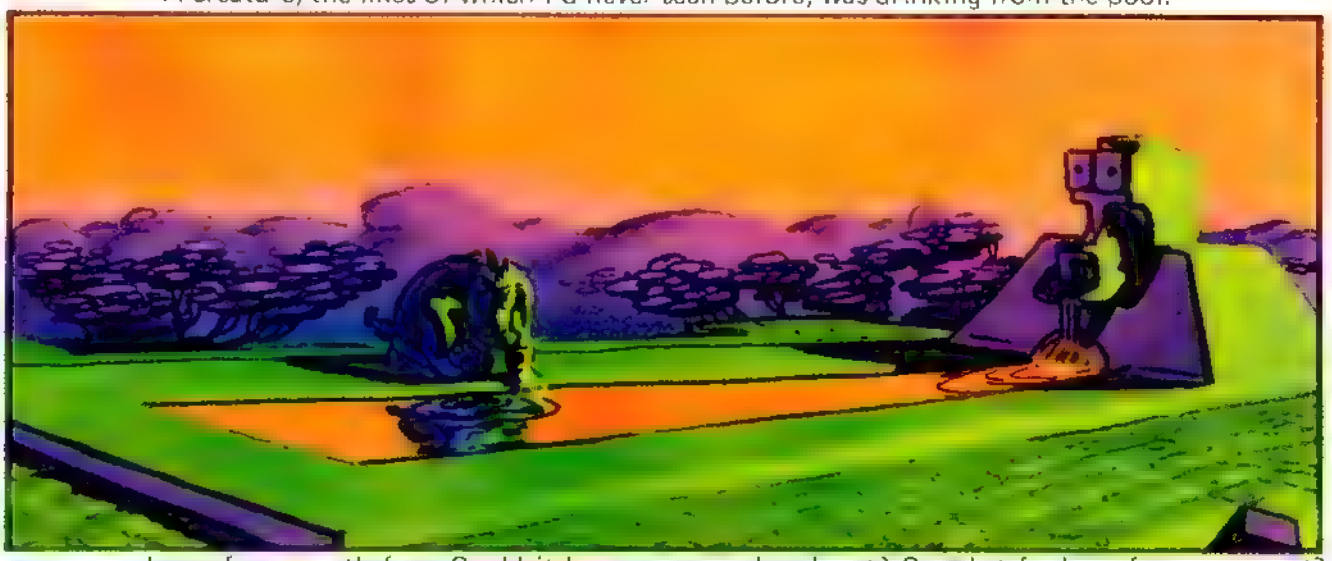
As evening approached I came upon an enigmatic oasis with a fountain. I pondered the artisans identity. I was happy to drink the sweet water without pause. The abundant fruits were also delicious.

After further refreshing myself, I thought to find a place to sleep. Apprehensive of predacious creatures that might habit the fountain, I left its immediate vicinity and found a protected spot nearby.

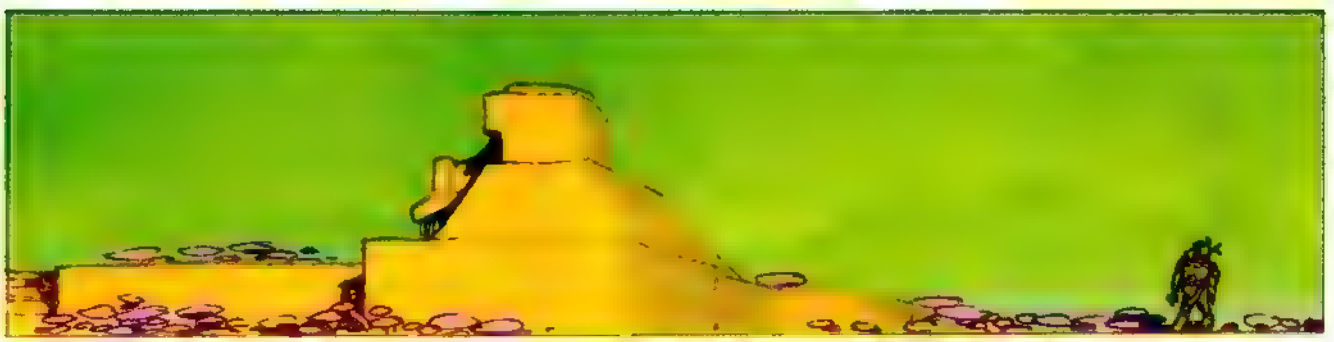
Near morning dreams came to me. There was a person, and the book of my former vision. The surroundings were strangely familiar.

The man's attention was wholly upon reading and was surprised by the discovery of the loose paper. Then the scene changed. The man manipulated miniature structures into an incomprehensible assembly. I awoke with an overwhelming anxiety.

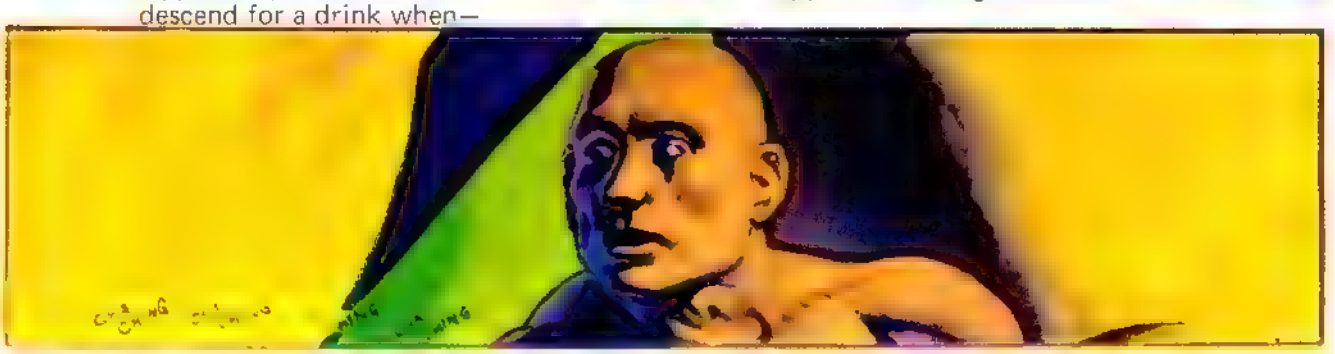
A creature, the likes of which I'd never seen before, was drinking from the pool.



I was frozen with fear. Could it hear my pounding heart? Could it find me from my scent? Could it sense my presence by some unknown faculty?



Apparently quenched, the lizardman left and disappeared among the rocks. I was about to descend for a drink when—



Another figure approached.

The ornamented headdress and anklets exuded the sound that alerted me.

I concluded that it was an Indian girl, which gave me new thoughts about my location. She drank and left.

CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING CHA CHING

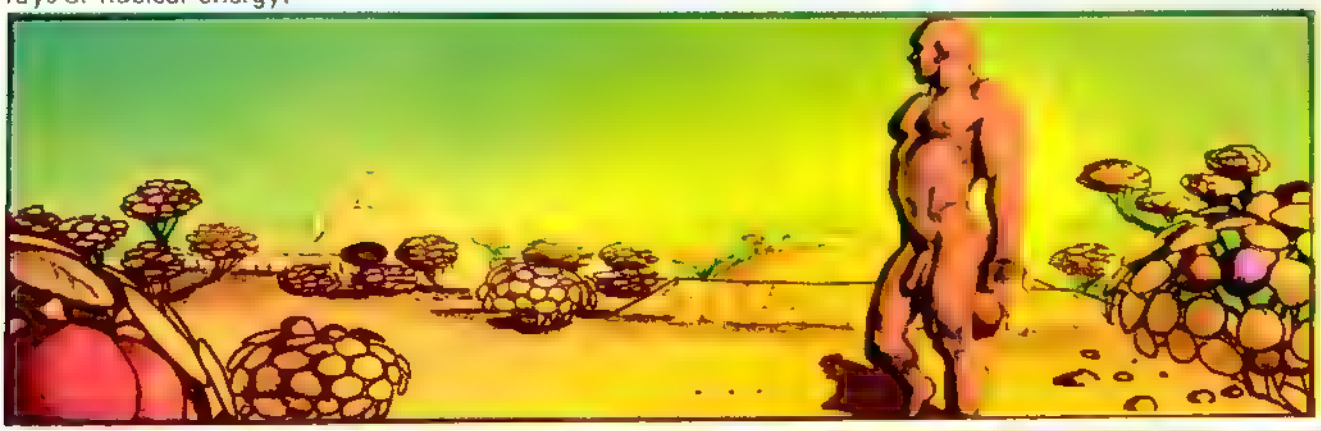
The girl traveled toward the edifice. It was my quest also, though I had no predetermined purpose there.

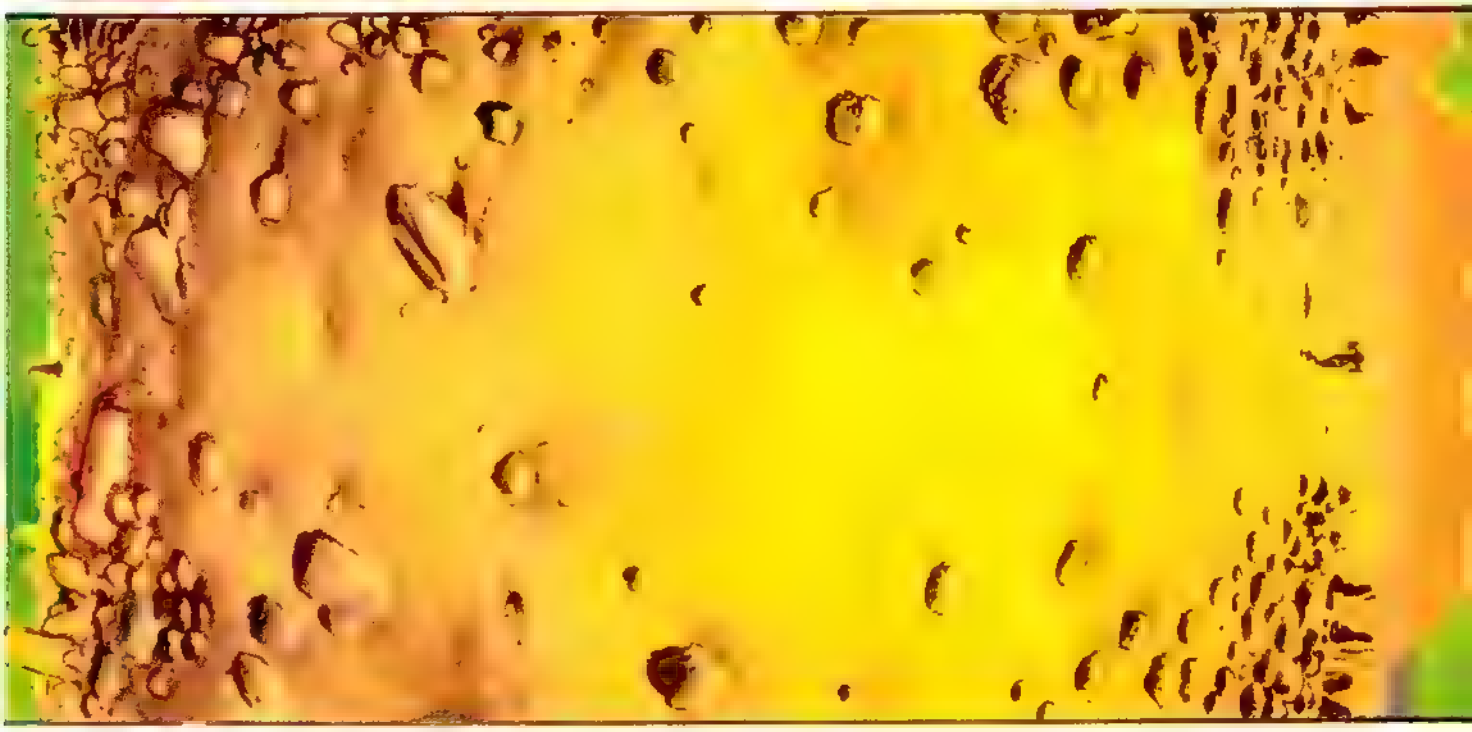
I ate. . .

Drank. . .

And followed her.

I studied the artifact as I passed. I conjectured that it housed machinery that drew water from rocks or the depths of the earth (if this really was Earth). And was powered by solar rays or nuclear energy.





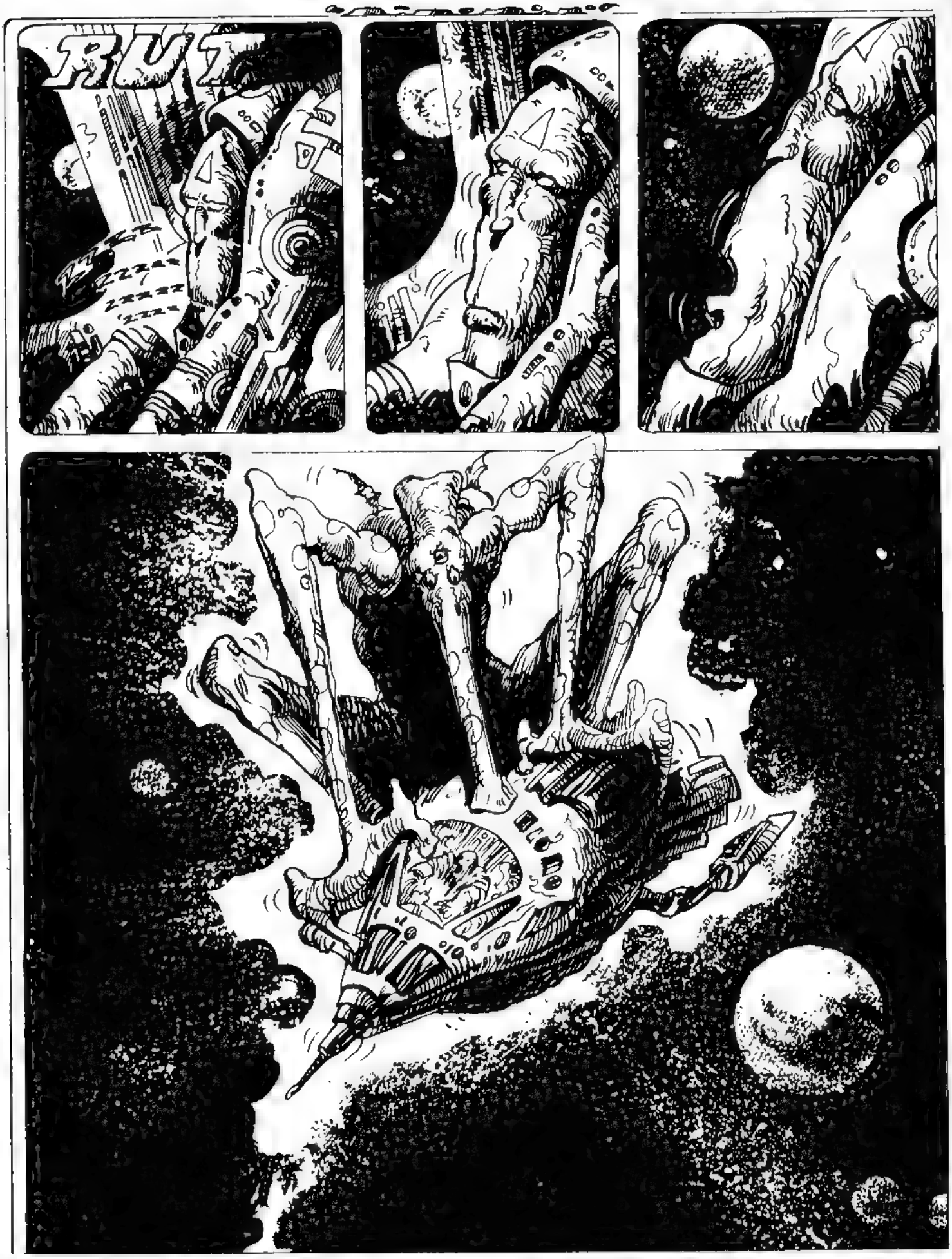
This was the only human I'd seen since I had awakened here. Perhaps I should've confronted her and tried communication. An ominous aura about her discouraged that plan. It was the SOUND!! Why would a sane person travel in this hostile land wearing noisy ornaments which could attract carnivorous beasts. I circled ahead to watch her pass.

The images stirred phantasmic forces in my head and erotic ones in my body.

Surprised at my own reaction, I sat motionless, wondering about what had caused it and what to do next, when a shadow crossed me.

It was the lizardman I had seen earlier. Was it a coincidence that he traveled in this same direction?. . .I rejected this thought. He seemed intent upon something. . . the girl. . . I was suddenly afraid, not for myself, but for her even though I didn't know her.

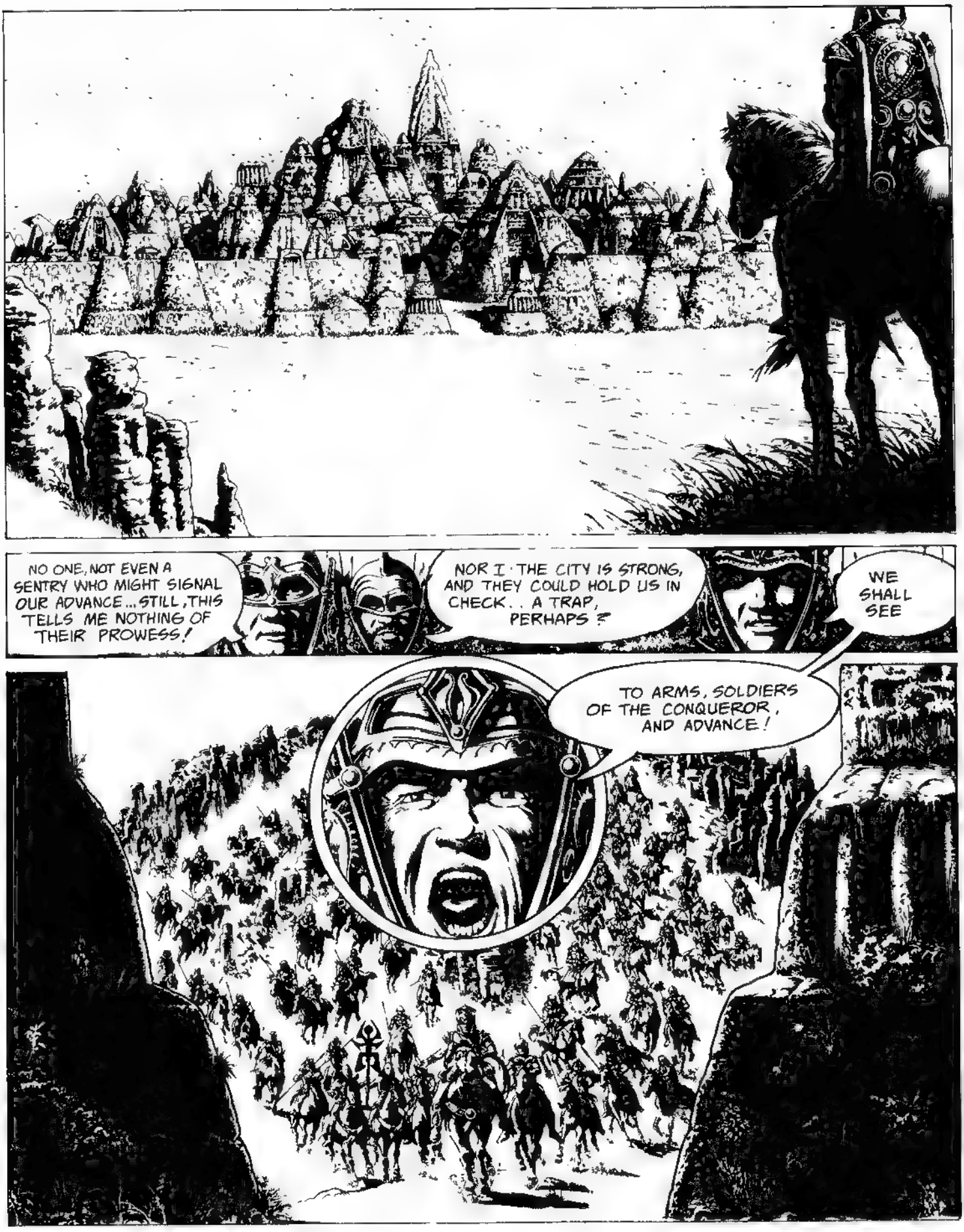
Continued Next Issue


BUT

HOLY SHIT! WHAT KIND OF SCREWY STUNT...?
GOOD GRIEF! IT'S TRYING TO..
FRRPUFF
EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF! IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS AT THIS SEASON. THESE OBSCENE LITTLE BEASTS WHO LAY THEIR EGGS EVERYWHERE...

BY ALL THE FROGS OF THE UNIVERSE! THE MANUAL DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT THIS!!
BUT AN OLD HAND IN SPACE HAS HIS RESOURCES...
HA! A LITTLE SHOT OF THE OLD ACCELERATION!
OOUUUYYY!
KAÏ KAÏ KAÏ KAÏ
DOWN YOU FILTHY BEASTS!
GLOUP!
OH, NO! ONE OF THEM GOT IN...
Fin

CONQUERING ARMIES

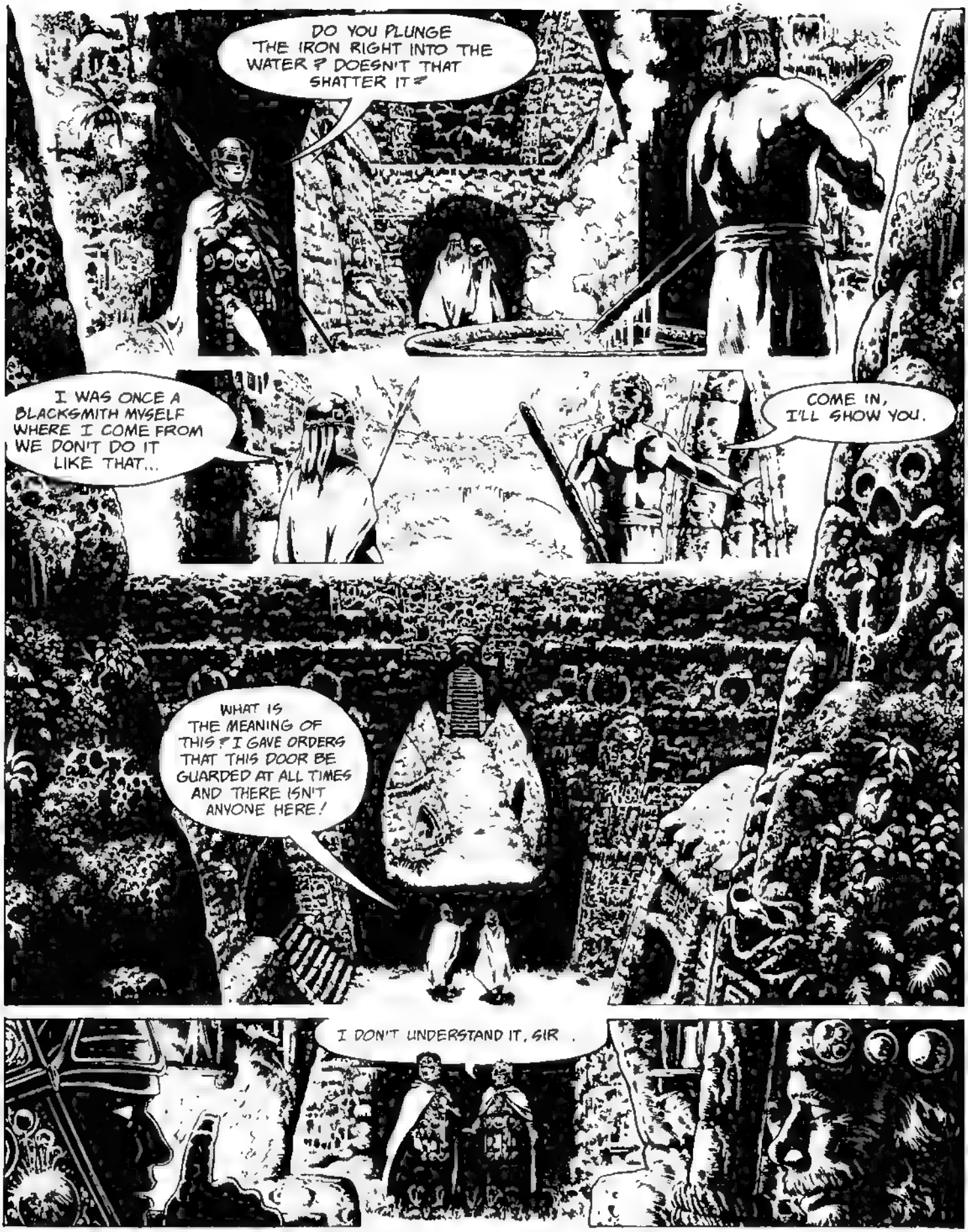

NO ONE, NOT EVEN A SENTRY WHO MIGHT SIGNAL OUR ADVANCE... STILL, THIS TELLS ME NOTHING OF THEIR PROWESS!
NOR I · THE CITY IS STRONG, AND THEY COULD HOLD US IN CHECK.. A TRAP, PERHAPS ?
WE SHALL SEE
TO ARMS, SOLDIERS OF THE CONQUEROR, AND ADVANCE!

Greetings, Prince.
We have taken for thee, without battle, the city which is called Jerim by its inhabitants. At our approach, there was neither signal nor alarm. The ramparts remained empty and the gates opened before us. It took little time to surround the place.
Then the natives left their homes and came to yield to me, your envoy.
We shall pass the winter here, awaiting your arrival. The messenger may tell you more, upon your request.

UPON THE WALL WHICH DOMINATES THE PLAIN, THE SENTINEL KEEPS GUARD, STIFF AND SAD, BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO CELEBRATE THE VICTORY WITH THOSE WHOSE SHOUTS AND CRIES HE HEARS BELOW...
WE HAVE FORBIDDEN PILLAGE. I HAVE A MIND TO...
LEAVE THEM BE THEY HAVE CROSSED THE DESERT AND HAVE NOT SEEN THEIR HOMES FOR A LONG TIME. THEY OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY THEMSELVES!

AND YOU, SOLDIER, WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT? YOU SEEM SAD... SPEAK FREELY.
I AM NOT HAPPY, MASTER. I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO FIGHT.
THIS RING -- I TOOK IT FROM A CORPSE WHEN WE ENTERED KALETH: ALL THE ABLE-BODIED MEN WERE DEAD. HERE THEY DON'T SAY ANYTHING. THEY LOOK AT US AND THEY OBEY US
HE'S RIGHT THE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE RESISTED US
I JUST DON'T LIKE IT.
THEIR RELIGION, PERHAPS?
BESIDES, I MADE A POINT OF FORBIDDING ANYONE TO MOLEST THEIR PRIESTS OR TO FORCE THE DOORS OF THEIR TEMPLES...
BUT I HAVE DOUBLED THE GUARD, ALL THE SAME

WEEKS PASSED... WINTER CAME...
SOME OF THE SOLDIERS FELL INTO A STUPOR, OTHERS DOGGEDLY SOUGHT OUT NEW PLEASURES... STILL OTHERS BECAME AWARE OF THE EVIL OF THE PLACE...


DO YOU PLUNGE THE IRON RIGHT INTO THE WATER? DOESN'T THAT SHATTER IT?
I WAS ONCE A BLACKSMITH MYSELF WHERE I COME FROM WE DON'T DO IT LIKE THAT...
COME IN, I'LL SHOW YOU.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? I GAVE ORDERS THAT THIS DOOR BE GUARDED AT ALL TIMES AND THERE ISN'T ANYONE HERE!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, SIR.

AND THE WINTER CAME TO AN END
I HAVE MADE A TOUR OF THE CITY. THERE ARE NO MORE GUARDS. NOWHERE / NO MORE SOLDIERS IN THE STREET.
I KNOW. THEY ARE DISAPPEARING.
THEY ARE DESERTING.
NO. AND IT ISN'T EVEN THE POPULATION FORMING A SECRET RESISTANCE .. THAT'S WHY I DRINK.
IT'S THE CITY. IT...
IT...

NO, IT WILL NOT GET ME!
BONG

THREE IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
HEY! YOU DOWN THERE!
YES, YOU, COME HERE!
I KNOW YOU
YOU ARE ONE OF MY MEN!
I WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT RING IN A THOUSAND!

DIE, TRAITOR!
DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
CITY!
YOU WILL NOT GET ME! YOU WILL NOT GET ANOTHER PERSON I WILL GO TO MEET THE ARMY TO PREVENT THIS .. /

ABOUT FOUR LEAGUES FROM THE CITY, THE SECOND ARMY DISCOVERED FOUR CORPSES DRAWN UP ALONG THE ROAD
ONE OF THEM WAS THAT OF AN OFFICER
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FIN

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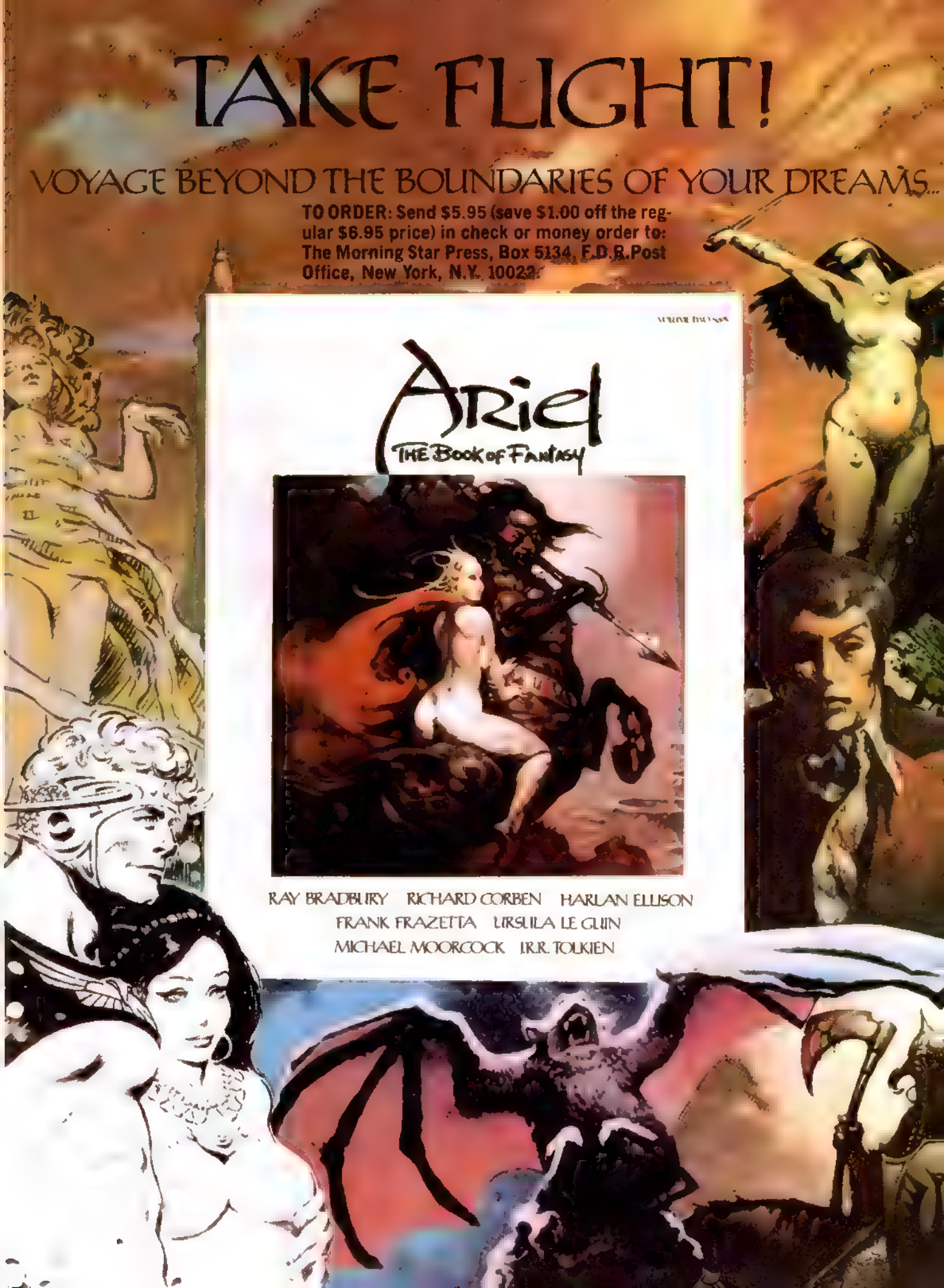
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The Adventures of YRRIS

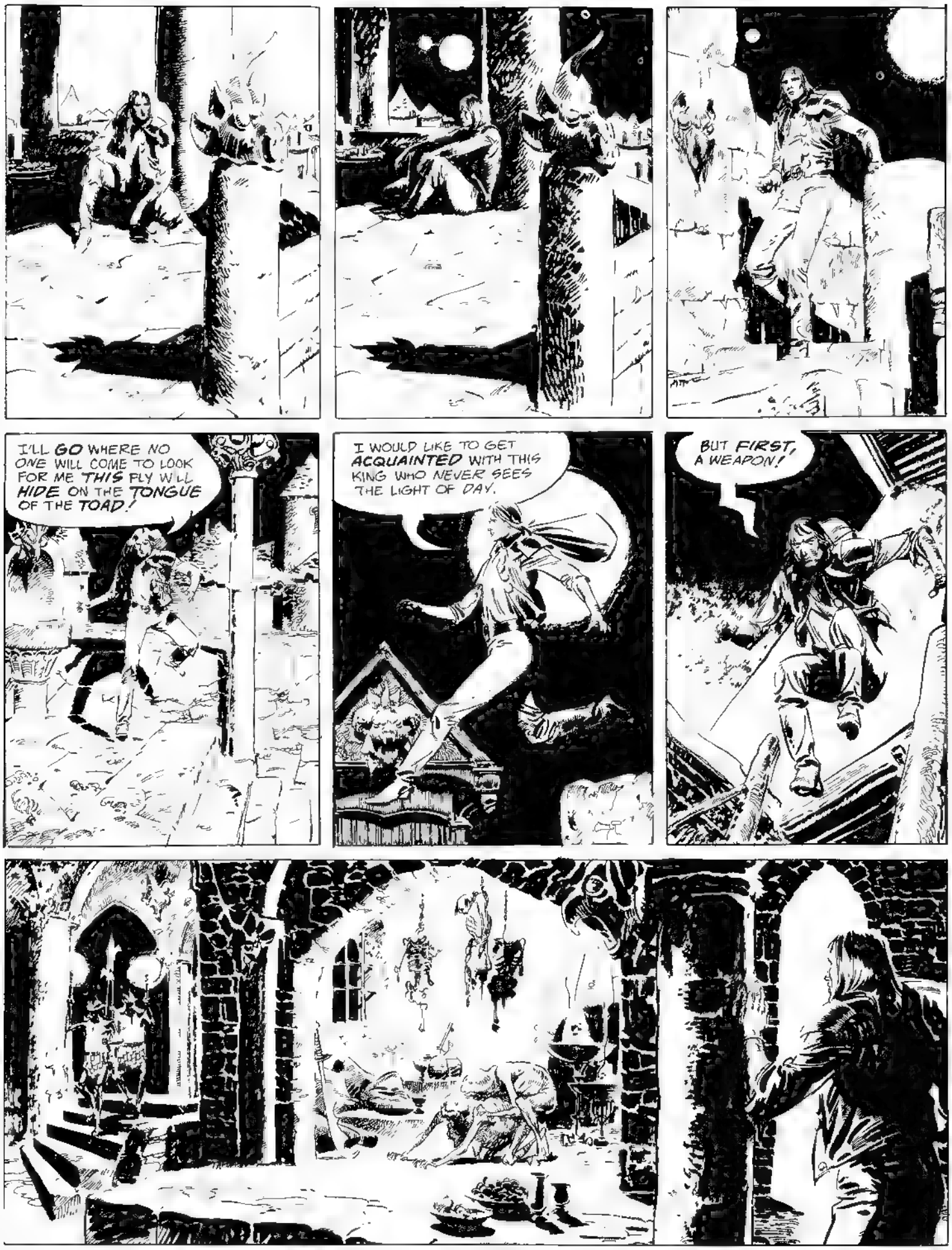
HERE FOLLOWS THE STORY OF **YRRIS**, PRINCE OF THIEVES, AND OF HIS ADVENTURE IN THE **LAND OF THE DRAGONS**... IN THEIR CITY IT WAS PROVED THAT THE SKILL AND COURAGE OF **YRRIS** WERE NO MERE LEGEND.

BY GAROT, WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY PLACE!
AND WHAT A STENCH!
BY THE DEMONS! AFTER SO MANY DAYS OF LONELY TRAVELING, THIS IS A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES..
I SMELL THE ODOR OF GOLD MIXED WITH THAT OF FLESH. THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY!

WELL, AREN'T ANY OF YOU TAKEN BY THESE FIVE BEAUTIFUL CREATURES?
BY THE DEMONS, ARE THERE NO MEN LEFT IN THE CITY OF ORIAM?
ONLY SIX HUNDRED GOLD ORIAMS FOR THE LOT, A PITTANCE COMPARED TO THE JOYS THEY CAN OFFER YOU IN RETURN!

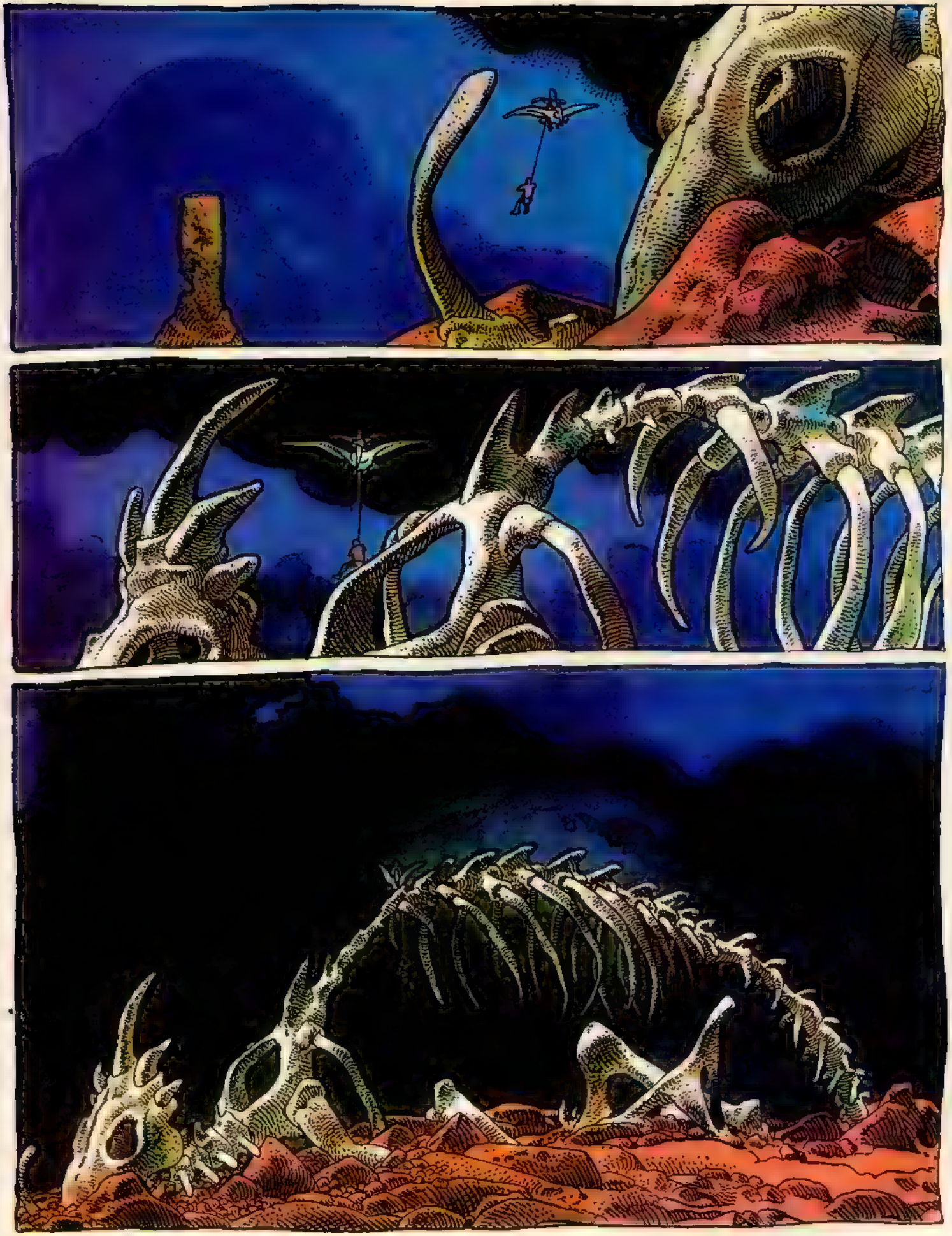
THESE PEOPLE HAVE A TRULY ODD APPEARANCE ...AND THIS SMELL!
BY SAROT, THOSE ARE LOVELY SPECIMENS!
HERE IS A YOUNG LORD WHO CAN AFFORD THESE BEAUTIES!
HE HAS ALL THE MONEY HE NEEDS, DON'T YOU, LITTLE THIEF?
THE MONEY YOU'VE JUST TAKEN FROM US!
BUT WHAT DOES MONEY MATTER TO US? WE HAVE OTHER PLEASURES
WHAT KIND OF WASP'S NEST HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

THEY'RE ALL YOURS, THIEF. WITH THEM YOU'LL BE SERVED AS DINNER TO OUR KING! NOW, LET THE GATES OF OUR CITY BE SHUT!
AND NOW WE ARE SERPENTS AND DRAGONS, OUR SCALES AS COLD AS THE DEEPEST DARK, OUR HUNGER BLACK AND TERRIBLE.
THROUGH ALL REALMS FROM DAWN 'TIL DARK, OF ALL THOSE NEAR AND FAR, WE ARE THE CRUELEST AND FIERCEST. WE ARE THE SPAWN OF THE DRAGON, AND ALL THAT LIVES IS OUR PREY!
THEY STOLE US FROM THE NEIGHBORING PROVINCES THIS IS A CANNIBAL CITY, AND THEIR KING, A TERRIBLE DRAGON, HAS NEVER SEEN THE LIGHT OF DAY THEY HAVE LEFT YOU HERE IN MOCKERY. NOW THE DRAGON KING SHALL EAT US ALL, AND LEAVE THE SCRAPS TO THEM.
BY SAROT AND ALL THE DEMONS, I CAN ONLY COME TO GRIEF IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS!


I'LL GO WHERE NO ONE WILL COME TO LOOK FOR ME THIS FLY WILL HIDE ON THE TONGUE OF THE TOAD!
I WOULD LIKE TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THIS KING WHO NEVER SEES THE LIGHT OF DAY.
BUT FIRST, A WEAPON!

To be continued...

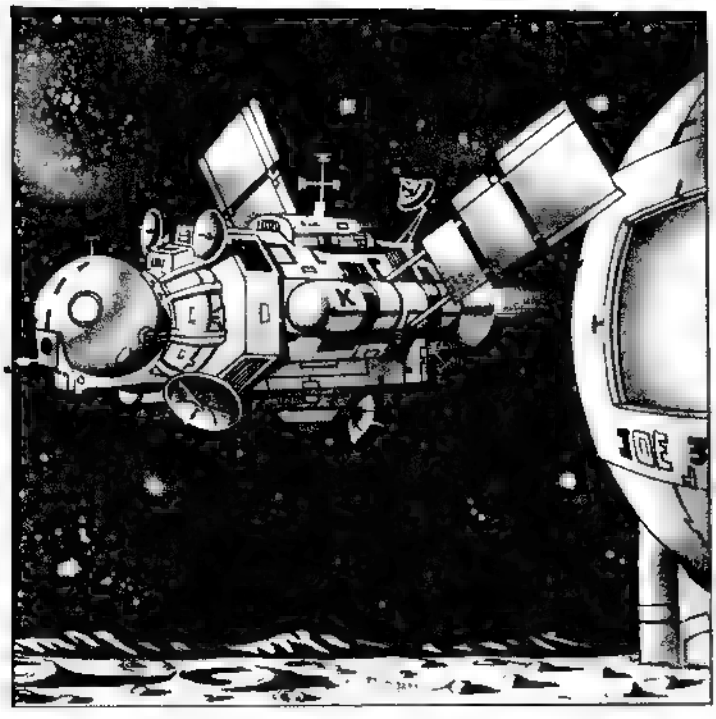
ARZACH

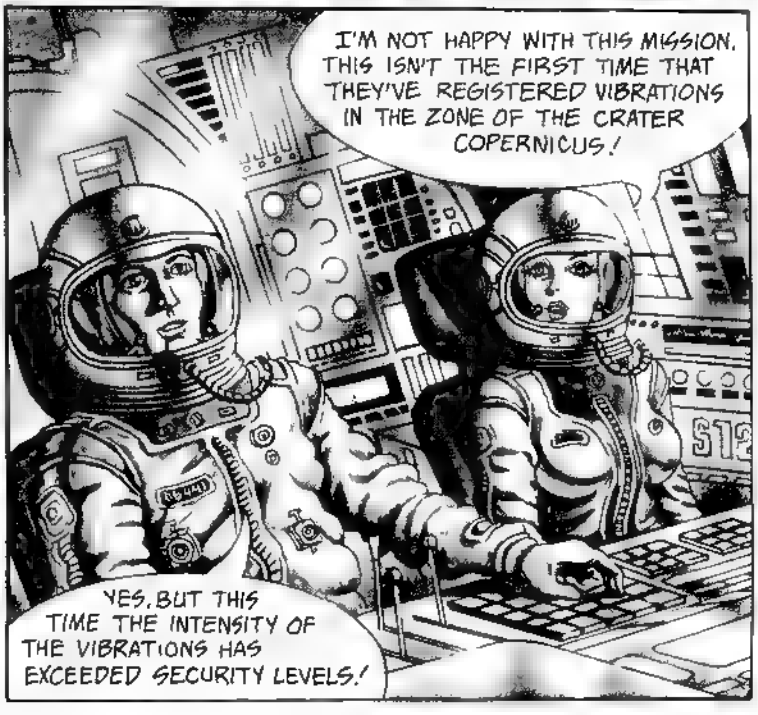


FIN

SELENIA

AIR LOCK OPEN FOR EGRESS OF EXPEDITION TO COPERNICUS!



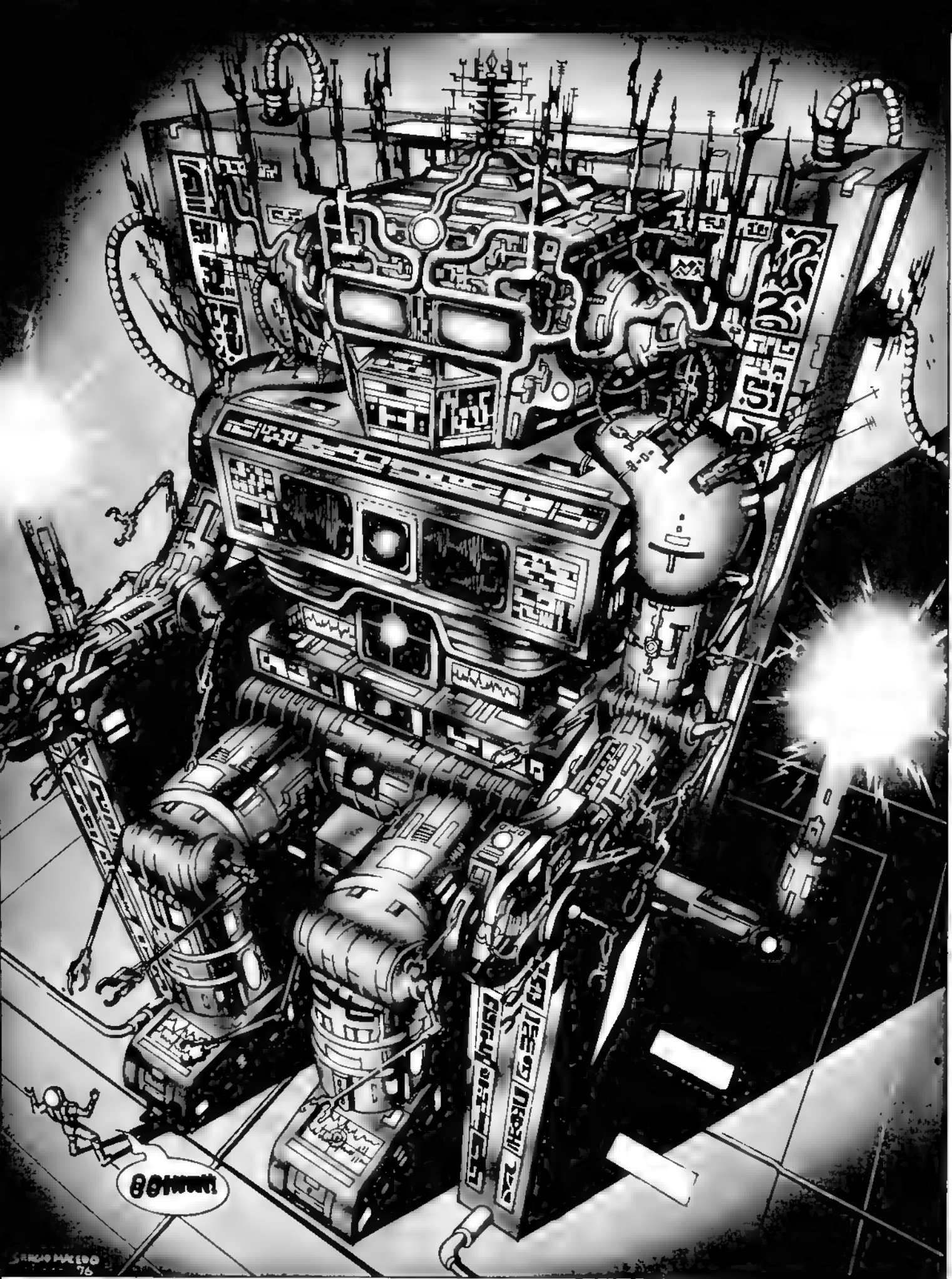

I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THIS MISSION. THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME THAT THEY'VE REGISTERED VIBRATIONS IN THE ZONE OF THE CRATER COPERNICUS!
YES, BUT THIS TIME THE INTENSITY OF THE VIBRATIONS HAS EXCEEDED SECURITY LEVELS!

THE SHOCK WAVES SEEM TO BE COMING FROM THIS EXCAVATION OVER HERE ..
THERE'S A PIT AT THE BOTTOM!
REQUEST PERMISSION TO DESCEND
PERMISSION GRANTED!

IT'S AN ARTIFICIAL PIT -- AT LEAST 200 METERS DEEP!

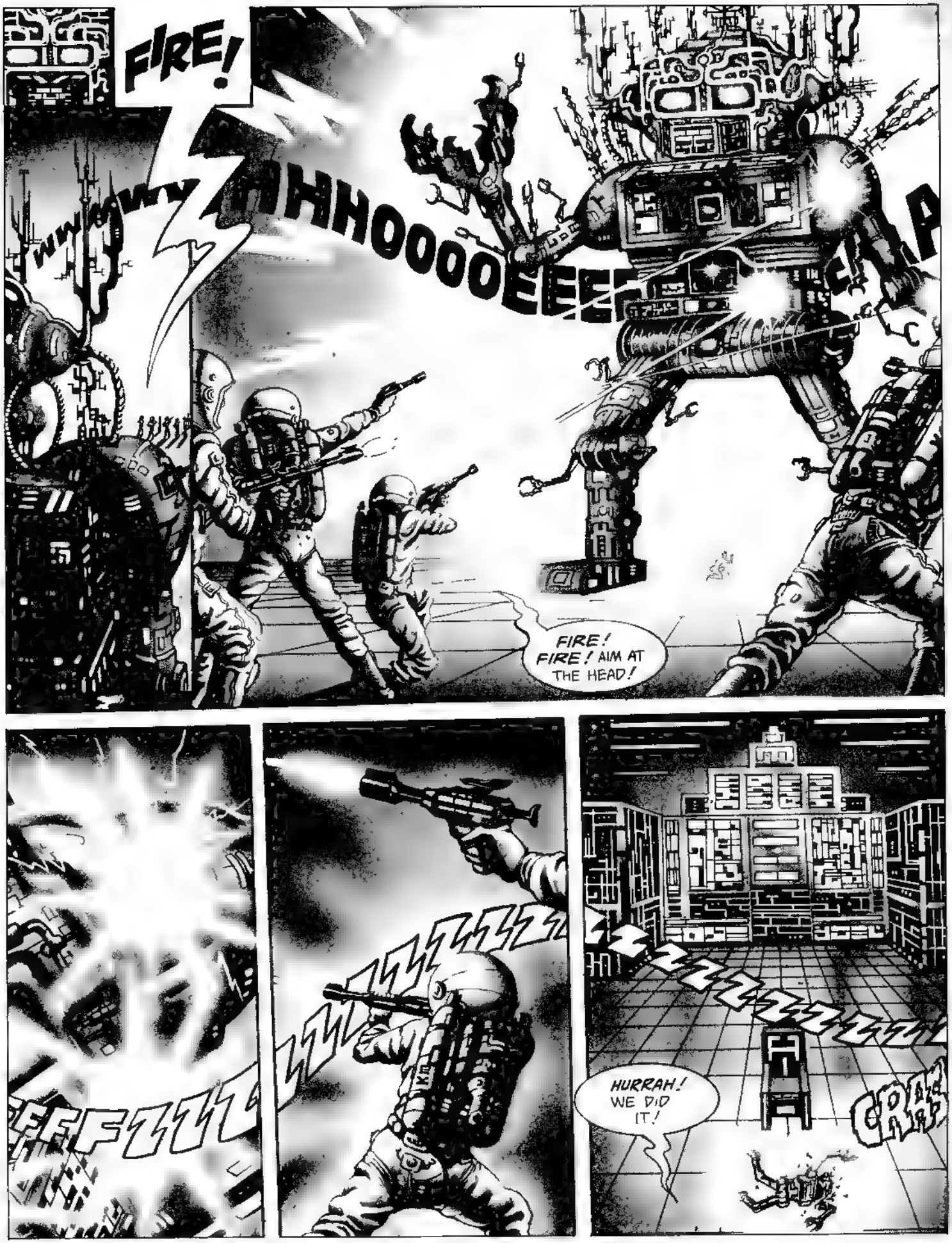
...LOOK! THERE'S A DOOR!

OOHHM!
WHAM!
HEY!
WHOOOEEAAA
THIS FORCE IS IT'S TAKING ME! HELP!
KLANG!
SHE HAS BEEN SUCKED INTO THE INTERIOR, AND THIS DOOR IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OPEN..
BUT
THIS SUCTION IS IRRESISTIBLE. WHAT A STRANGE PLACE. PUT HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE .. AND ALL THESE NUMBERS RESOUNDING IN MY HEAD. OH, NO! OH, NO! AAHH! IT'S INHUMAN!
BIP-BIP...
APPEL..
415...256..
..VAR GORTAH


BOOOM!

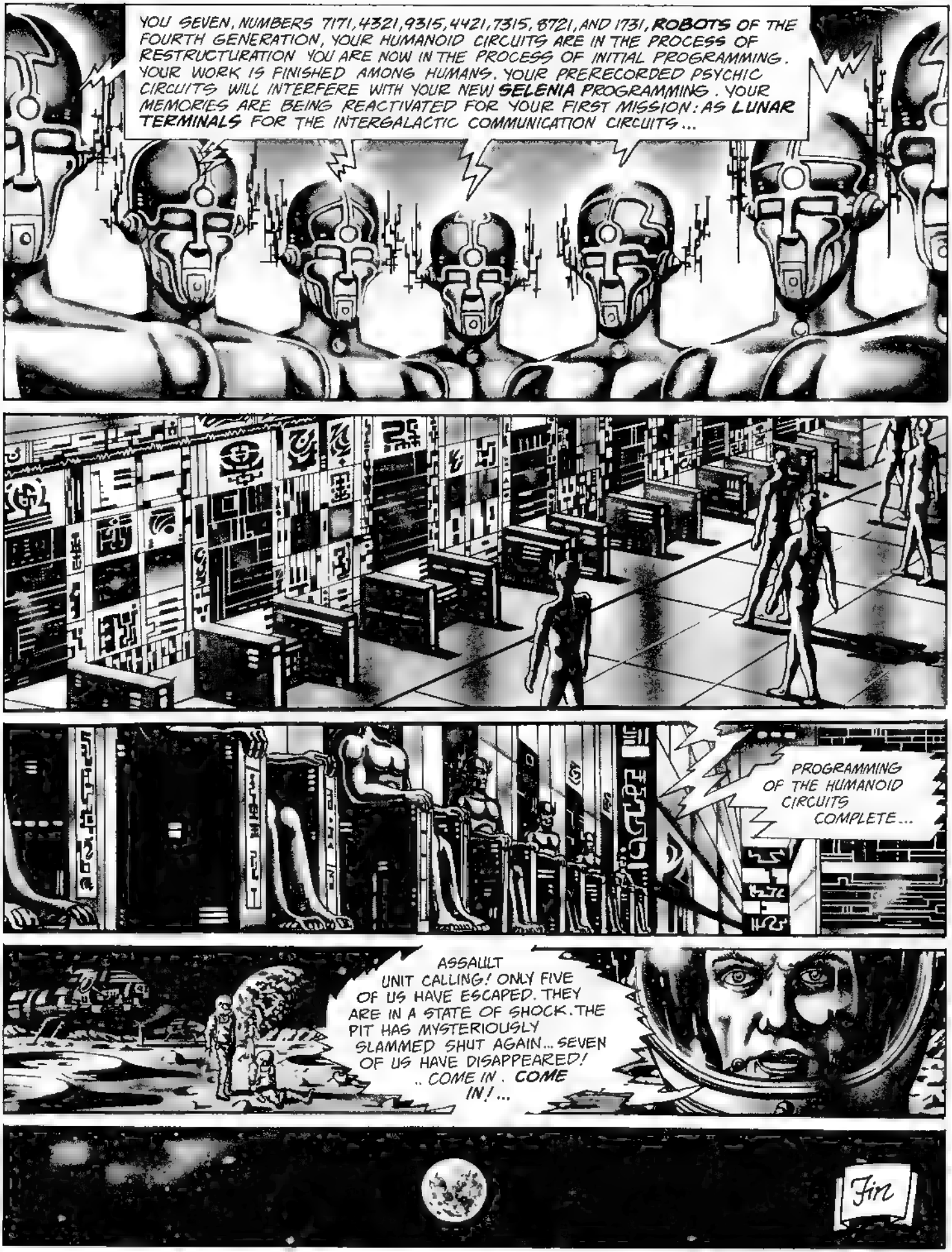
ASSISTANT 714 IS BEING HELD PRISONER IN A SORT OF SECRET CHAMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF A PIT.
REQUEST ASSAULT UNIT!
ASSAULT UNIT IS GO!
TH

THIS FORCE... IT'S INVADING MY MIND AND PARALYZING ME... I AM AT THE MERCY OF THIS METAL MONSTER...
ZZ
FFZZZZZZZZZ!
OH!
LOOK OUT!
HOLY SPACE!


FIRE!
WWWWW
HHOOOOEEEE
FIRE! FIRE! AIM AT THE HEAD!
FEFTTT

OOHHH...
ZZZZZZZ
LOOK! THE ROBOT'S DEMATERIALIZING!
FZUT
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT. IT HAS COMPLETELY VOLATIZED!
BUIZZZZZZZ
ZONE 415 REPORTING... SELENIA REPORTING... I AM RELAY STATION 415-C IN THE PLANETARY SYSTEM, INSTALLED A THOUSAND MILLION YEARS AGO BY THE GALACTIC CONFEDERATION. I AM PROGRAMMED TO ASSURE THE CONTROL OF THE INTERGALACTIC COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS OF THE LUNAR SATELLITE.
ENERGIZING TRANSMISSION 912... UNTIL NOW THESE CIRCUITS WERE GUARDED BY VAR GOR TAH, FIFTH GENERATION ROBOT, STATIONED HERE BY THE CONFEDERATION A MILLION YEARS AGO. SELENIA PERMITTED YOUR ARRIVAL AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT GUARDIAN. ACCORDING TO CODE 24 OF THE CONFEDERATION, THE TERMINALS OF THE GALACTIC NETWORK MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE CONDITIONS OF THAT PLANET. THIS IS WHY THE HUMANS OF PLANET 3, WHO HAVE CONQUERED THE MOON, MUST BE MADE TERMINALS
AAHH! THIS IS UNBEARABLE!

AH!
HELP!
FIVE OF OUR MEN HAVE BEEN SUCKED AWAY AND OUTSIDE! AND WE HAVE BEEN CORNERED BY THIS FORCE FIELD. WE ARE PRISONERS!
SEVEN OF YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THIS MISSION.. YOU MUST FUNCTION HERE UNTIL THE HUMANS OF YOUR PLANET HAVE BEEN REPLACED...
LOOK! MY HAND IS TURNING INTO METAL...
THIS FORCE HAS US SURROUNDED!
WE... HAVE... BEEN.. CAUGHT... IN A TRAP.. BZZZ... ZZZ.. TZZZNNNGZZZZZZ


YOU SEVEN, NUMBERS 7171, 4321, 9315, 4421, 7315, 8721, AND 1731, ROBOTS OF THE FOURTH GENERATION, YOUR HUMANOID CIRCUITS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURATION YOU ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF INITIAL PROGRAMMING. YOUR WORK IS FINISHED AMONG HUMANS. YOUR PRERECORDED PSYCHIC CIRCUITS WILL INTERFERE WITH YOUR NEW SELENIA PROGRAMMING. YOUR MEMORIES ARE BEING REACTIVATED FOR YOUR FIRST MISSION: AS LUNAR TERMINALS FOR THE INTERGALACTIC COMMUNICATION CIRCUITS...
PROGRAMMING OF THE HUMANOID CIRCUITS COMPLETE...
ASSAULT UNIT CALLING! ONLY FIVE OF US HAVE ESCAPED. THEY ARE IN A STATE OF SHOCK. THE PIT HAS MYSTERIOUSLY SLAMMED SHUT AGAIN... SEVEN OF US HAVE DISAPPEARED! .. COME IN. COME IN!...
Fin

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Noble companions beset by sorcerers and monsters, on their quest for a magical sword in another universe. It's a quarter of a million words long. Frank Herbert, author of the *Dune* trilogy, calls it "a marvelous fantasy trip." Lester del Rey says it's "very special in every way."
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These illustrations and others, by the brothers Hildebrandt, are also from the book, which will be published in hardcover and as a Ballantine paperback in April.

The Sword of Shannara

By Terry Brooks

Menion Leah had not found the last leg of the journey to the Anar quite so simple. When he first realized he had become separated from the two Valemen, panic set in. He was not afraid for himself, but he feared the very worst for the Ohmsfords if left alone to find their way out of the mist-shrouded Black Oaks. He, too, had called hopelessly, futilely, stumbling blindly about in the blackness until his voice was cracked. But in the end he was forced to admit to himself that the search was useless under such conditions. Exhausted, he pushed on through the woods in what he believed to be the general direction of the lowlands, consoling himself slightly with the promise that he would find the others in the daylight. He was in the forest a longer time than he had anticipated, breaking free near dawn and collapsing at the edge of the grasslands. Though he did not know it then, he had emerged at a point south of the sleeping brothers. By this time his endurance had been pushed to the limit and sleep came over him so quickly that he could not remember anything after the slow, featherlight feeling of falling as he collapsed in the tall lowland grass. It seemed to him that he slept a very long time, but in fact he awakened only several hours after Shea and Flick had begun their journey toward the Silver River. Believing that he was a considerable distance south of the point the group had been making for while in the Black Oaks, Menion quickly chose to travel north and try to cut across the trail of his companions before reaching the river. If he failed to find them by that time, he knew he would be confronted with the unpleasant probability that they were still lost in the entanglement of the woods.

Hurriedly, the highlander strapped on his light pack, shouldered the great ash bow and the sword of Leah and began to march rapidly northward. The few hours of afternoon daylight

remaining disappeared quickly as he walked, his sharp eyes searching carefully for any sign of human passage. It was almost dusk when he finally picked up the signs of someone traveling in the direction of the Silver River. He found the trail to be several hours old, and he could be reasonably certain that there was more than one person. But there was no way to tell who the travelers were, so Menion pushed on hurriedly in the half-light of dusk, hoping to catch them when they stopped for the night. He knew that the Skull Bearers would also be searching for them, but brushed his fears aside, remembering that there was no reason to connect him with the Valemen. In any event, it was a calculated risk he had to take if he expected to be of any service to his friends.

Shortly thereafter, just before the sun dropped behind the horizon completely, Menion caught sight of a figure to the east of him traveling in the opposite direction. Menion quickly called out to the other, who seemed startled by the highlander's sudden appearance and tried to move away from him. Menion quickly took up the chase, running after the frightened traveler and calling to him that he meant no harm. After several minutes he caught the man, who turned out to be a peddler selling cooking ware to outlying villages and families in these lowlands. The peddler, a bent, timid individual who had been frightened badly by the unexpected pursuit, was now thoroughly terrified by the sight of the tall, sword-bearing highlander facing him at nightfall in the middle of nowhere. Menion hastily explained that he meant no harm, but was looking for two friends from whom he had become separated while traveling through the Black Oaks. This proved to be the worst thing he could have told the little man, who was now thoroughly convinced the stranger was insane. Menion considered telling him that he was the Prince of Leah, but quickly discarded that idea. In the end, the peddler revealed to him that he had seen two travelers fitting the general description of the Valemen from a distance earlier in the afternoon. Menion could not tell if the man had told him that much for fear of his life or to humor him, but he accepted the tale and bade good evening to the little man, who was obviously delighted to be let off so easily, and made a hasty escape southward into the sheltering darkness of evening.

Menion was forced to admit to himself that it was now too dark to attempt to follow the trail of his friends, so he cast about for a likely campsite. He found a pair of large pines that appeared to be the best shelter available and he moved into them, glancing anxiously at the clear night sky. There was sufficient light to enable a prowling Northland creature to find any camped travelers with relative ease, and he inwardly prayed that his friends had sense enough to pick a carefully hidden spot to spend the night. He tossed down his own pack and weapons beneath one of the spreading pines and crawled under the shelter of its low-hanging branches. Famished from the past two days' journey, he devoured the last of his supplies, thinking as he did so that the Valemen would be faced with the same food shortage in the days ahead. Grumbling aloud at the bad luck that had separated them, he reluctantly wrapped himself in his light blanket and was quickly asleep, the great sword of Leah unsheathed at his side, gleaming dully in the moonlight.

Unaware of the events that had transpired that night while he slept soundly several miles south of the Silver River, Menion Leah rose the next day with a new plan in mind. If he could cut across country, traveling northeast, he could catch up with the Valemen much more easily. He was certain that they would be following the edge of the Silver River as it wound its way eastward into the Anar Forests, so their paths had to cross farther up river. Abandoning the faint traces of the trail left the previous day, Menion began to journey across the lowlands in an easterly direction, thinking to himself that if he did not come across some sign of them upriver when he reached the water's edge, he could double back downstream. He also entertained hopes of sighting some small game that would provide meat for the evening meal. He whistled and sang to himself as he walked, his lean face relaxed and cheerful at the prospect of a reunion with his lost comrades. He could even picture the stolid disbelief on old Flick's stern face at the sight of his return. He walked easily with long, loping strides that covered the ground quickly and evenly, the swinging, measured step of the experienced woodsman and hunter.

As he traveled, his thoughts drifted back to the events of the past several days, and he pondered the significance of all that had transpired. He knew little about the history of the Great Wars and the reign of the Druid Council, the mysterious appearance of the so-called Warlock Lord and his defeat by the combined might of three nations. Most disturbing of all was his almost total lack of knowledge of the legend behind the Sword of Shannara, the fabled weapon that for so many years had been a watchword symbolic of freedom through courage. Now it was the birthright of an unknown orphan, half man, half elf. The thought was so preposterous that he still found it impossible to conceive of Shea in that role. He knew instinctively that something was missing from the picture—something so basic to the whole puzzle of the great Sword that, without knowing what it was, the three friends were so many windblown leaves.

Menion also knew that he was a part of this adventure for the sake of friendship alone. Flick had been right about that. Even now he was unsure exactly why he had been persuaded to undertake this journey. He knew he was less than a Prince of Leah should be. He knew that his interest in people had not been deep enough, and he had never really wanted to know them. He had never tried to understand the important prob-

Continued on page 78

Continued from page 57

lems of governing justly in a society where the monarch's word was the only law. Yet he felt that in his own way he was as good as any man alive. Shea believed he was a man to be looked up to. Perhaps so, he thought idly, but his life to date appeared to consist of one long line of harrowing experiences and wild escapades that had served little or no constructive purpose.

The smooth, grass-covered lowlands changed to rough, barren ground, rising abruptly in small hills and dropping sharply into steep, trenchlike valleys that made travel slow and almost hazardous in places. Menion looked anxiously ahead for some indication of more level terrain, but it was impossible to see very far, even from the top of the steep rises. He plodded on, deliberately and steadily, ignoring the roughness of the ground and silently berating his decision to come that way. His mind wandered briefly, then suddenly snapped back as he caught the sound of a human voice. He listened intently for several seconds, but could hear nothing further and dismissed it as the wind or his imagination. A moment later he heard it again, only this time it was the clear sound of a woman's voice, singing softly somewhere ahead of him, faint and low. He walked more quickly, wondering if his ears were playing tricks on him, but all the time hearing the woman's mellow voice grow louder. Soon the mesmeric sound of her singing filled the air in a gay, almost wild abandon that reach into the innermost depths of the highlander's mind, bidding him to follow, to be as free as the song itself. Almost in a trance he walked steadily on, smiling broadly at the images the happy song conjured up to him. Vaguely, he wondered what a woman would be doing in these bleak lowlands, miles from any kind of civilization, but the song seemed to dispel all his doubts in its warm assurance that it came from the heart

At the peak of a particularly bleak rise, somewhat higher than the surrounding hillocks, Menion found her sitting beneath a small twisted tree with long, gnarled branches that reminded him of willow roots. She was a young girl, very beautiful and obviously very much at home in these lands as she sang brightly, seemingly oblivious to anyone who might be attracted by the sound of her voice. He did not conceal his approach, but moved straight to her side, smiling gently at her freshness and youth. She smiled back at him, but made no effort to rise nor to greet him, continuing the gay strains of the tune she had been singing all this time. The Prince of Leah came to a halt several feet away from her, but she quickly beckoned him to come closer and sit next to her beneath the odd-shaped tree. It was then that from somewhere deep within him a small warning nerve twinged, some sixth sense not yet entranced by her vibrant song tugged at him and demanded to know why this young girl should ask a complete stranger to sit with her. There was no reason for his hesitation other than perhaps the innate distrust the hunter has for all things out of place and time in nature; but whatever the reason, it caused the highlander to pause. In that instant the girl and the song disappeared into vapor, leaving Menion to face the strange-looking tree on the barren rise.

For one second Menion hesitated, unable to believe what had just occurred, and then hastily moved to withdraw. But the loose ground about his feet opened even as he paused, releasing a heavy cluster of thick-gnarled roots which wound themselves tightly about the young man's ankles, holding him fast. Menion stumbled over backward trying to break free. For a moment he found his predicament to be ludicrous. But try as he might, he could not work free of those clinging roots. The strangeness of the situation increased almost immediately as he glanced up to see the strange root-limbed tree, previously immobile, approaching in a slow, stretching motion, its limbs extended toward him, their tips containing small but deadly-looking needles. Thoroughly aroused now, Menion dropped his pack and bow in one motion and unsheathed the great sword, realizing that the girl and the song had been an illusion to draw him within reach of this ominous tree. He cut briefly at the roots which bound him, severing them in places, but the work was slow because they were wound so tightly about his ankles that he could not risk broad strokes. Sudden panic set in as he realized he could not get free in time, but he forced the feeling down and shouted his defiance at the plant, which by now was almost on top of him. Swinging in fury as it came within reach, he quickly severed a number of the clutching limbs and it withdrew slightly, its whole frame shuddering in pain. Menion knew that with its next approach he had to strike its nerve center if he expected to destroy it. But the strange tree had other ideas; coiling its limbs into itself, it thrust them toward the imprisoned traveler one at a time, showering him with the tiny needles that flew off the ends. Many of them missed altogether and some bounced harmlessly off his heavy tunic and boots. But others struck the exposed skin of his hands and head and embedded themselves with small stinging sensations. Menion tried to brush them off, while protecting himself from further assault, but the little needles broke off, leaving their tips embedded in his skin. He felt a kind of slow drowsiness begin to steal over him and portions of his nervous system begin to go numb. He realized at once that the needles contained some sort of drug that was designed to put the plant's victim to sleep, to render it helpless for easy disposition Wildly, he fought the feeling seeping through his system, but soon dropped helplessly to his knees, unable to fight it, knowing that the tree had won.

But amazingly, the deadly tree appeared to hesitate and then to inch slightly backward, coiling again in attack. Slow, heavy footsteps sounded behind the fallen prince, approaching cautiously. He could not turn his head to see who it was, and a deep bass voice warned him abruptly to remain motionless The tree coiled expectantly to strike, but an instant before it released its deadly needles, it was struck with shattering impact by a huge mace that flew over the shoulder of the fallen Menion. The strange tree was completely toppled by the blow. Obviously injured, it struggled to raise itself and fight back. Behind him, Menion heard the sharp release of a bow-string and a long black arrow embedded itself deep within the plant's thick trunk. Immediately the roots about his feet released their grip and sank into the earth and the main portion of the tree shuddered violently, limbs thrashing the air and showering needles in all directions A moment later, it drooped slowly to the earth. With a final spasm, it lay motionless

Still heavily drugged from the needles, Menion felt the strong hands of his rescuer grip his shoulders roughly and force him into a prone position while a broad hunting knife severed the few remaining strands binding his feet. The figure before him was a powerfully built Dwarf, dressed in the green and brown woodsman's clothing worn by most of that race. He was tall for a Dwarf, a little over five feet, and carried a small arsenal of weapons bound about his broad waist. He looked down at the drugged Menion and shook his head dubiously

"You must be a stranger to do a dumb thing like that," he reprimanded the other in his deep bass voice. "Nobody with any sense plays around with the Sirens."

"I am from Leah...to the west," Menion managed to gasp out, his voice thick and strange to his own ears

"A highlander I might have known." The Dwarf laughed heartily to himself. "You'd have to be, I suppose. Well, don't worry, you'll be fine in a few days. That drug won't kill you if we get it treated, but you'll be out for a while "

He laughed again and turned to retrieve his mace. Menion, with his final ounce of strength, grasped him by the tunic.

"I must reach...the Anar...Culhaven," he gasped sharply. "Take me to Balinor .."

The Dwarf looked back at him sharply, but Menion had lapsed into unconsciousness. Muttering to himself, the Dwarf picked up his own weapons and those of the fallen highlander. Then with surprising strength, he heaved the limp form of Menion over his broad shoulders, testing the load for balance Satisfied at last that all was in place, he began trudging steadily, muttering all the while, moving toward the forests of the Anar.

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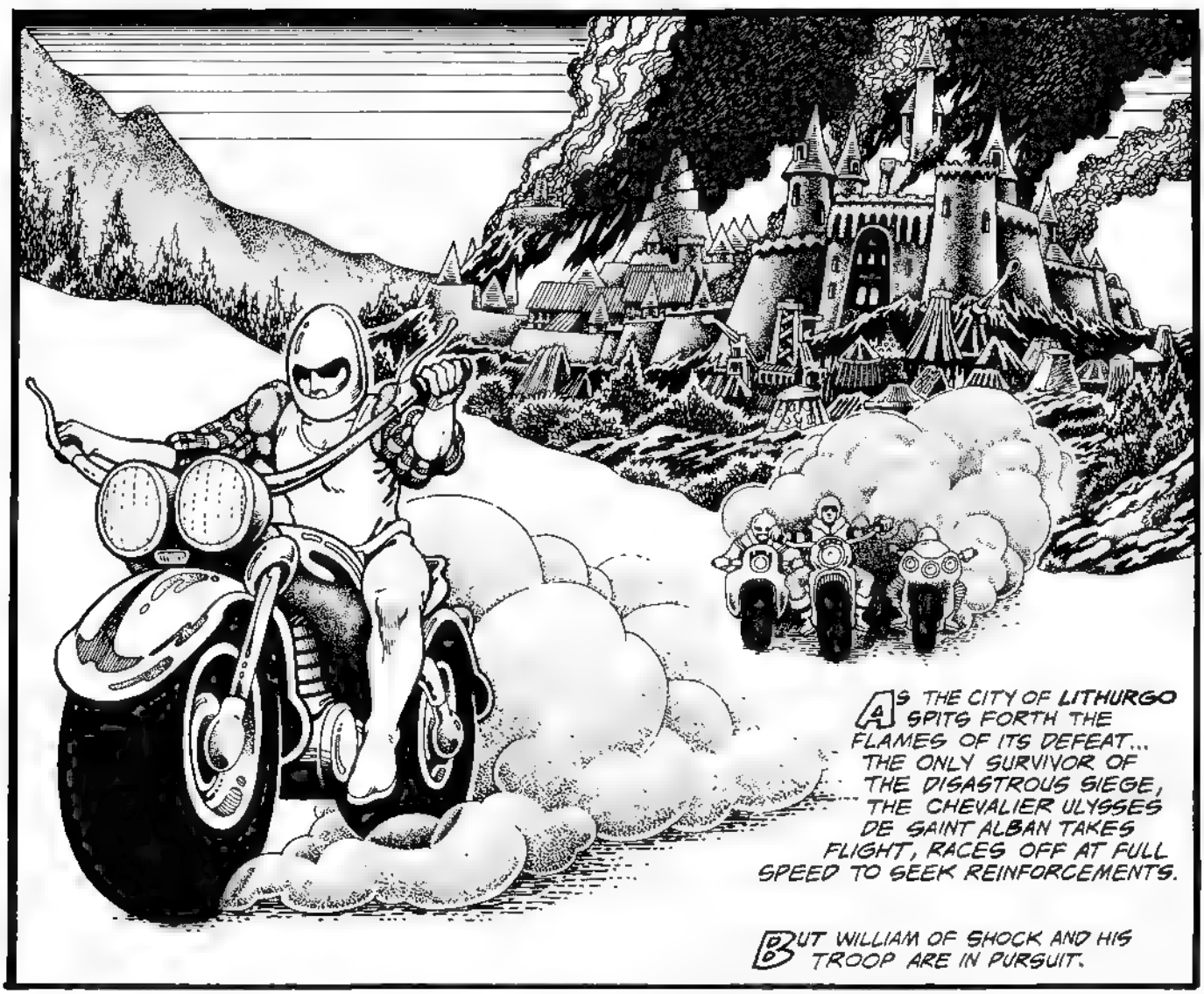
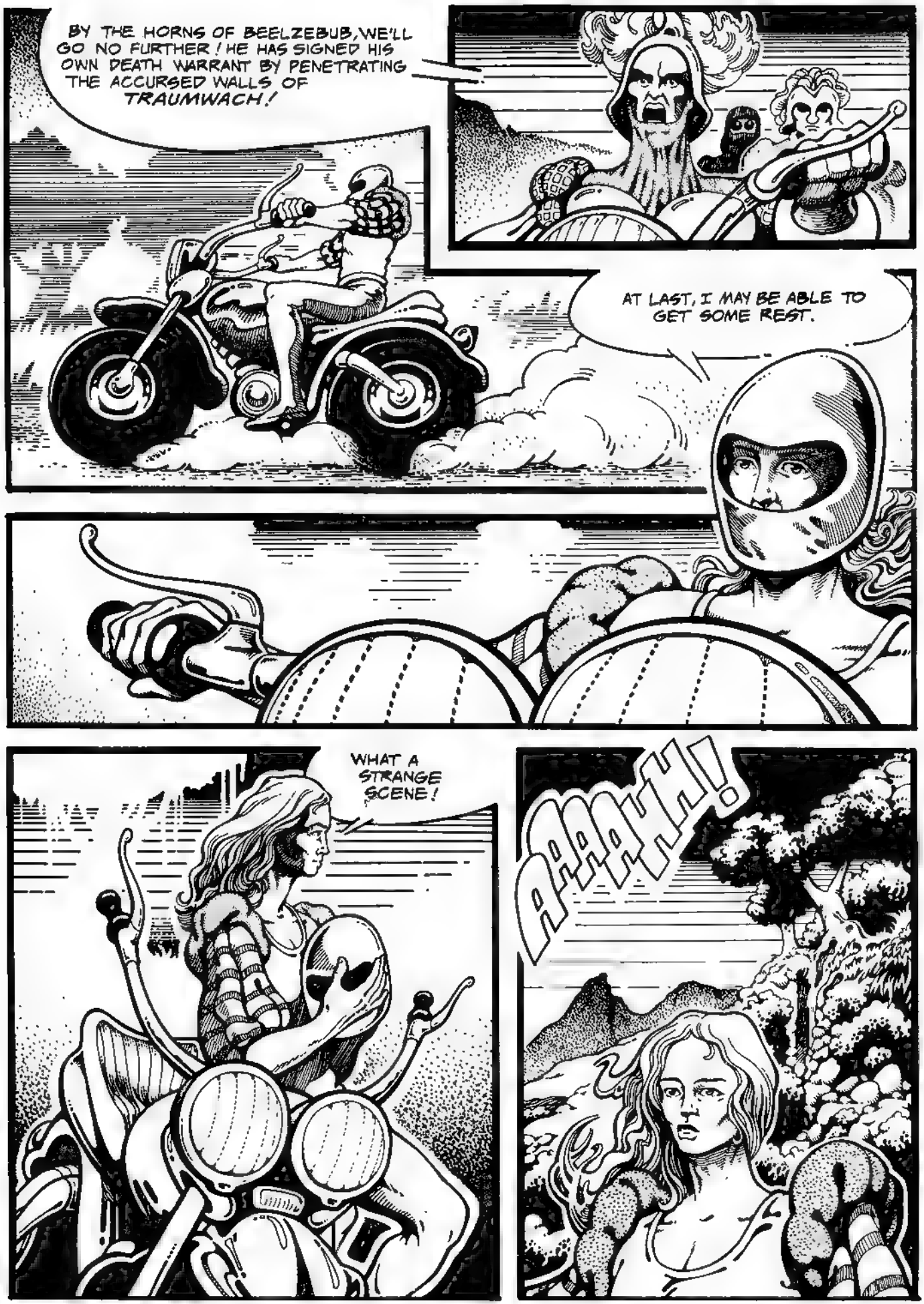

AS THE CITY OF LITHURGO SPITS FORTH THE FLAMES OF ITS DEFEAT... THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF THE DISASTROUS SIEGE, THE CHEVALIER ULYSSES DE SAINT ALBAN TAKES FLIGHT, RACES OFF AT FULL SPEED TO SEEK REINFORCEMENTS.
BUT WILLIAM OF SHOCK AND HIS TROOP ARE IN PURSUIT.


BY THE HORNS OF BEELZEBUB, WE'LL GO NO FURTHER! HE HAS SIGNED HIS OWN DEATH WARRANT BY PENETRATING THE ACCURSED WALLS OF TRAUMWACH!
AT LAST, I MAY BE ABLE TO GET SOME REST.
WHAT A STRANGE SCENE!
AAAH!

AN ANGEL!

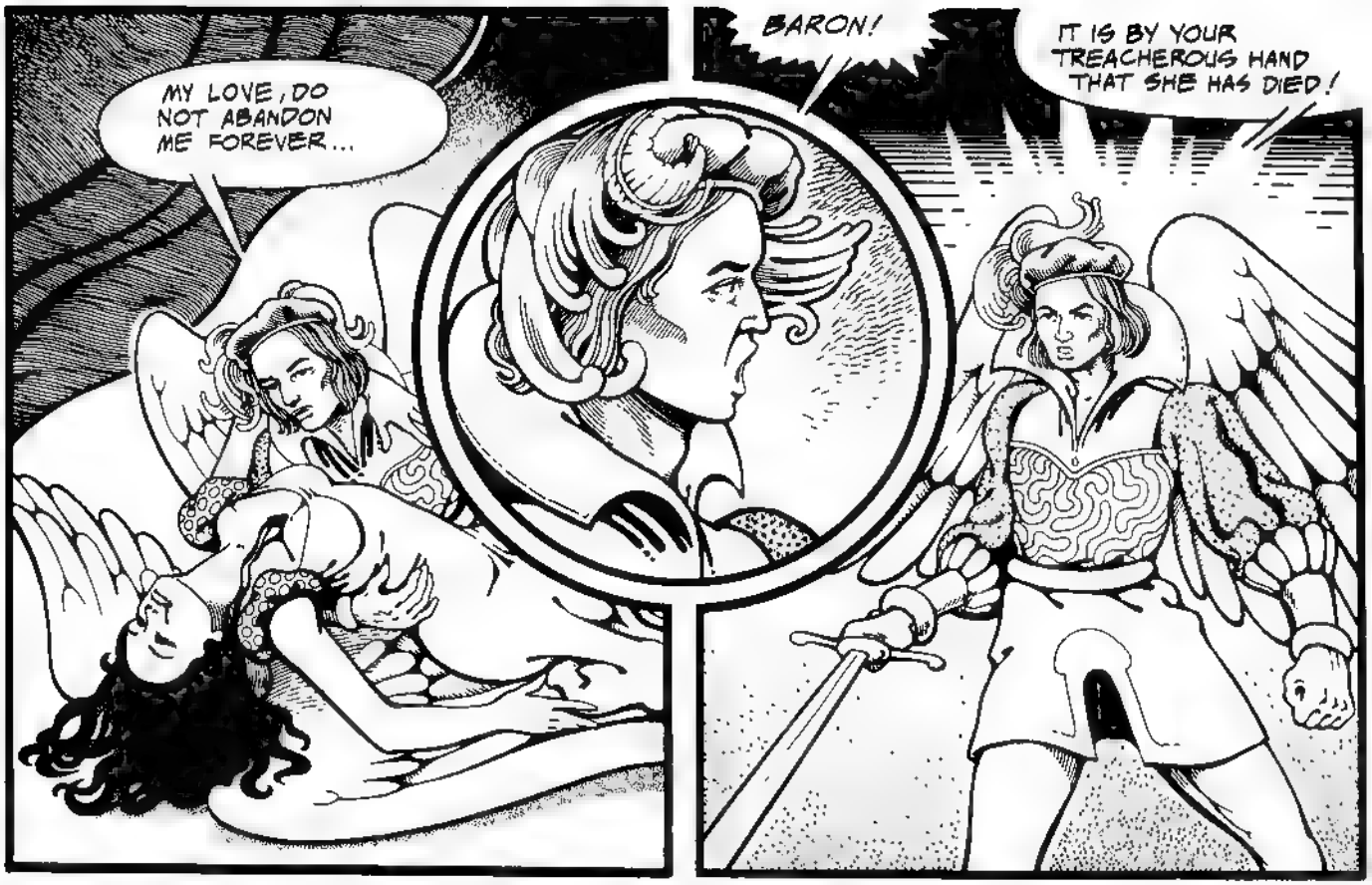
SAINT ALBAN SAVES THE WINGED MAIDEN FROM THE WAVES...
A HELPING HAND REACHES TOWARD THEM...
...A MAN OF AN ALARMING AND QUARRELSOME ASPECT INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO ULYSSES...
BARON VON EIFERSUCHT!
I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR VALOR, STRANGER, BUT NOW, LEAVE US ALONE!
I COMMAND YOU TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
SIRE, YOU ARE MAD!!
4

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS WEAKNESS, THE ANGEL RECAPTURES ITS PREY...
THE TRAITOR HAS TAKEN ME BY SURPRISE!
HE WILL ANSWER TO ME!
IS IT RAGE THAT DRIVES ME?
OR DOES THE DESIRE TO SEE THAT LOVELY CREATURE AGAIN HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT?
I AM LOSING SIGHT OF THEM...

A FANTASTIC SCENE APPEARS TO ULYSSES, AN IMAGINARY LAND...
AT THAT SAME MOMENT, ON THE STAGE OF THE THEATER OF CELESTIAL PASSIONS...
YOU WISHED TO ESCAPE ME! YOU SHALL SMART FOR THIS!
NOW YOU SHALL NEVER FLEE FROM ME, FOR I SHALL CLIP YOUR...
YOU AREN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING, BARON!

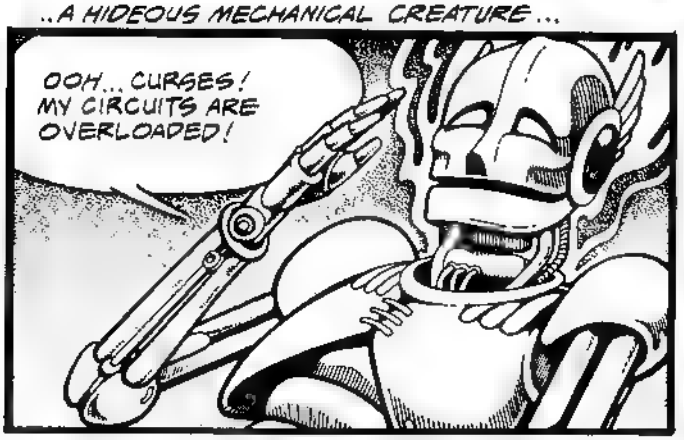
WHAT IMPUDENCE! WAS MY FIRST REPRIMAND NOT SUFFICIENT!?
CAREFUL! I WILL NOT HESITATE TO FIRE!
EVERYTHING SEEMED LOST, WHEN SUDDENLY...
LYSANDER, MY LOVE!
THE STAGE IS SET: WILL LOVE TRIUMPH OVER HATRED?

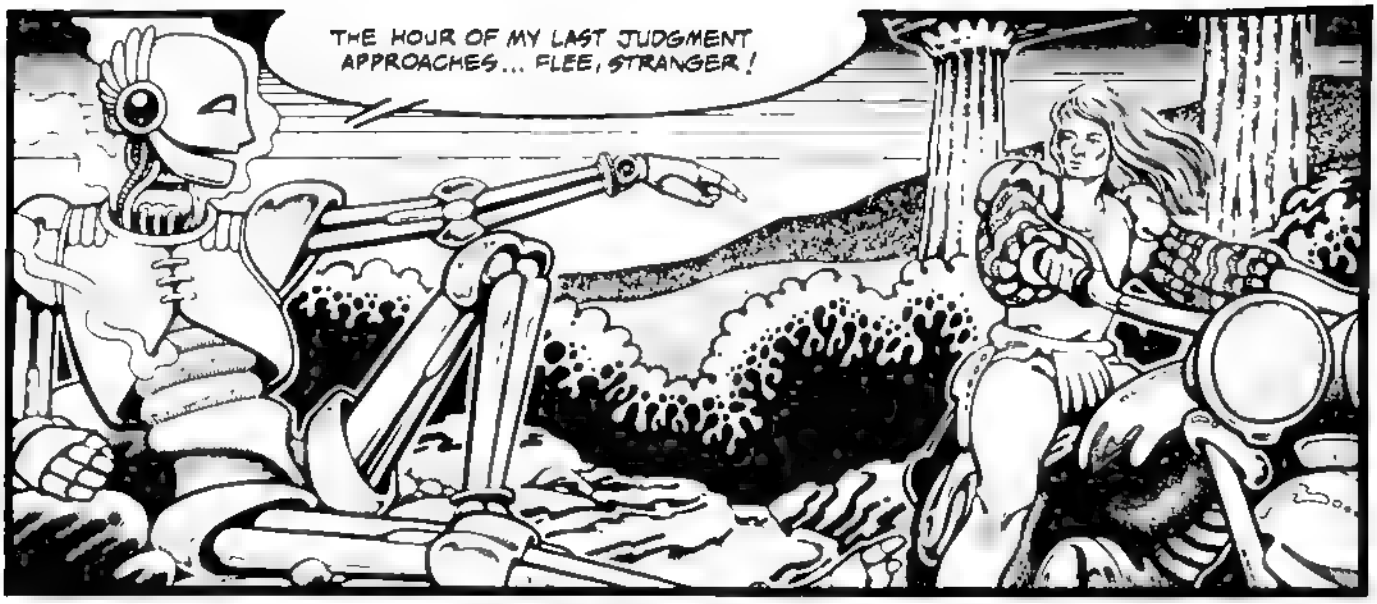
MAY GOD DECIDE BETWEEN US!
SIRES, I BEG YOU, SHED NO BLOOD FOR ME!
STAY OUT OF MY WAY, I TELL YOU!
STAND ASIDE!
AAH!
LYSANDER, I AM SLAIN!



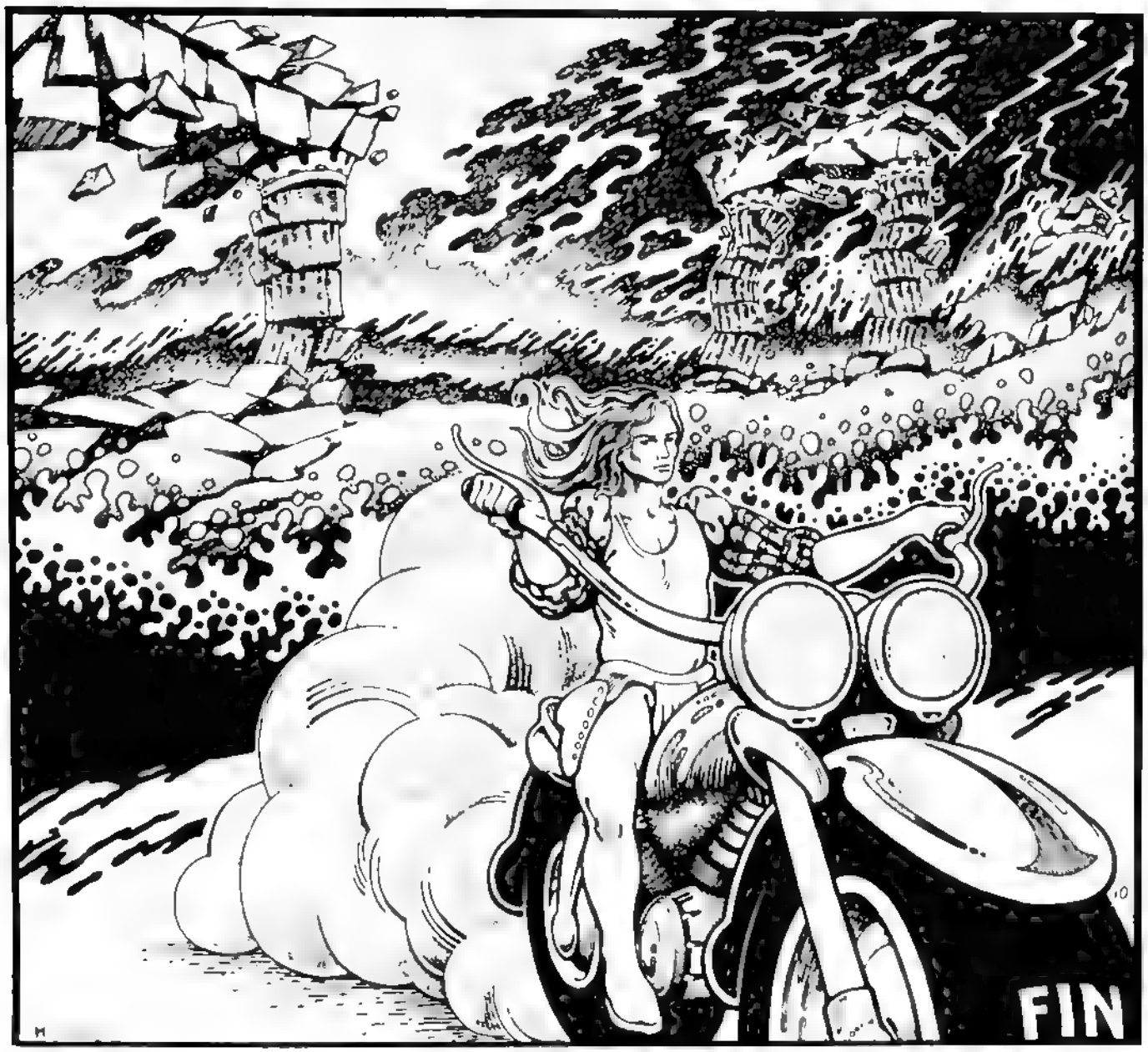
IMPALED UPON EACH OTHER'S BLADES, THE RIVALS SEEM TO DISINTEGRATE, TO TURN INTO...

...A HIDEOUS MECHANICAL CREATURE...

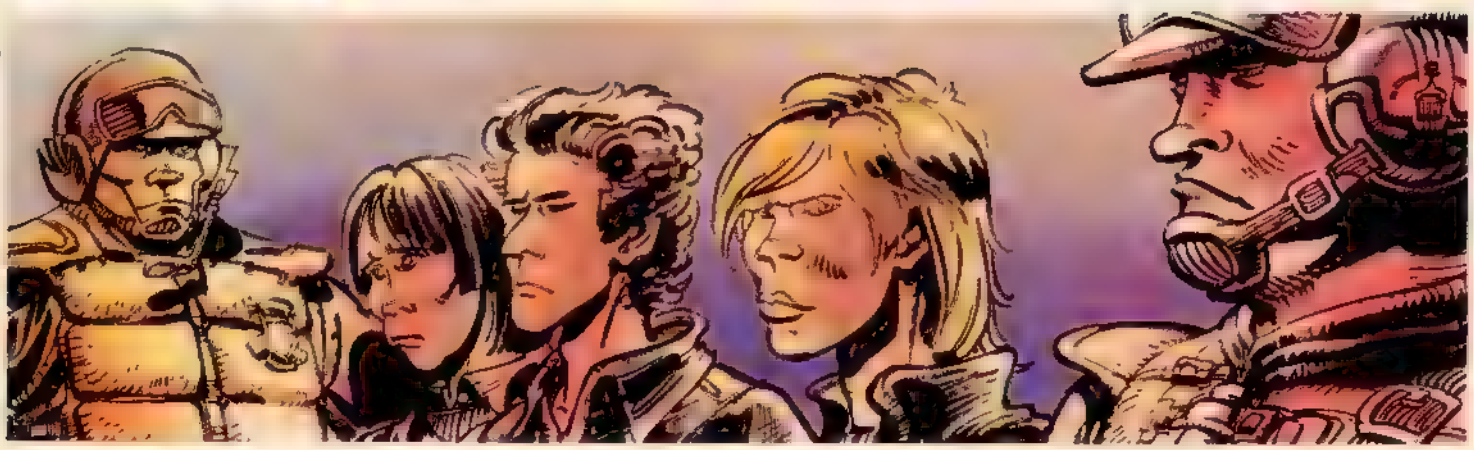




WITH A TERRIBLE CRASH, **TRAUMWACH** DISAPPEARS, ITS CREATOR GIVING UP THE GHOST, VICTIM OF THE ETERNAL CONFLICT BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.



SPACE PUNKS
IT HAD TO HAPPEN! I REMEMBER THE NIGHT THEY NAILED THE GANG! THE SKITSY APPACHES WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO GET NABBED BY A PATROL IN THE NORTHERN INSECURITY ZONE WHERE WE'D GONE TO COP OUR STASH OF NUTRO-TABS IN THE HANGAR OF THE OLD MILITARY ASTROPORT! NEW ALBERTA WAS KEEPING AN EYE ON HER BORDERS...



WE WERE DUE FOR A LONG STRETCH IN THE SLAMMER!

BUT IN HIS DECISION, BECAUSE WE WERE JUST KIDS, THE SUPREME CAREER COUNSELOR OFFERED US A DEAL: TEN YEARS IN REFORM SCHOOL... OR A FIFTEEN-YEAR HITCH IN THE COMMANDOS OF THE SPACE LEGION. MY PALS TURNED HIM DOWN, FLAT, BUT I JUMPED AT THE CHANCE AND SIGNED UP.

THE NEXT DAY I WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE TERRESTRIAL FORCES TRAINING DEPOT...

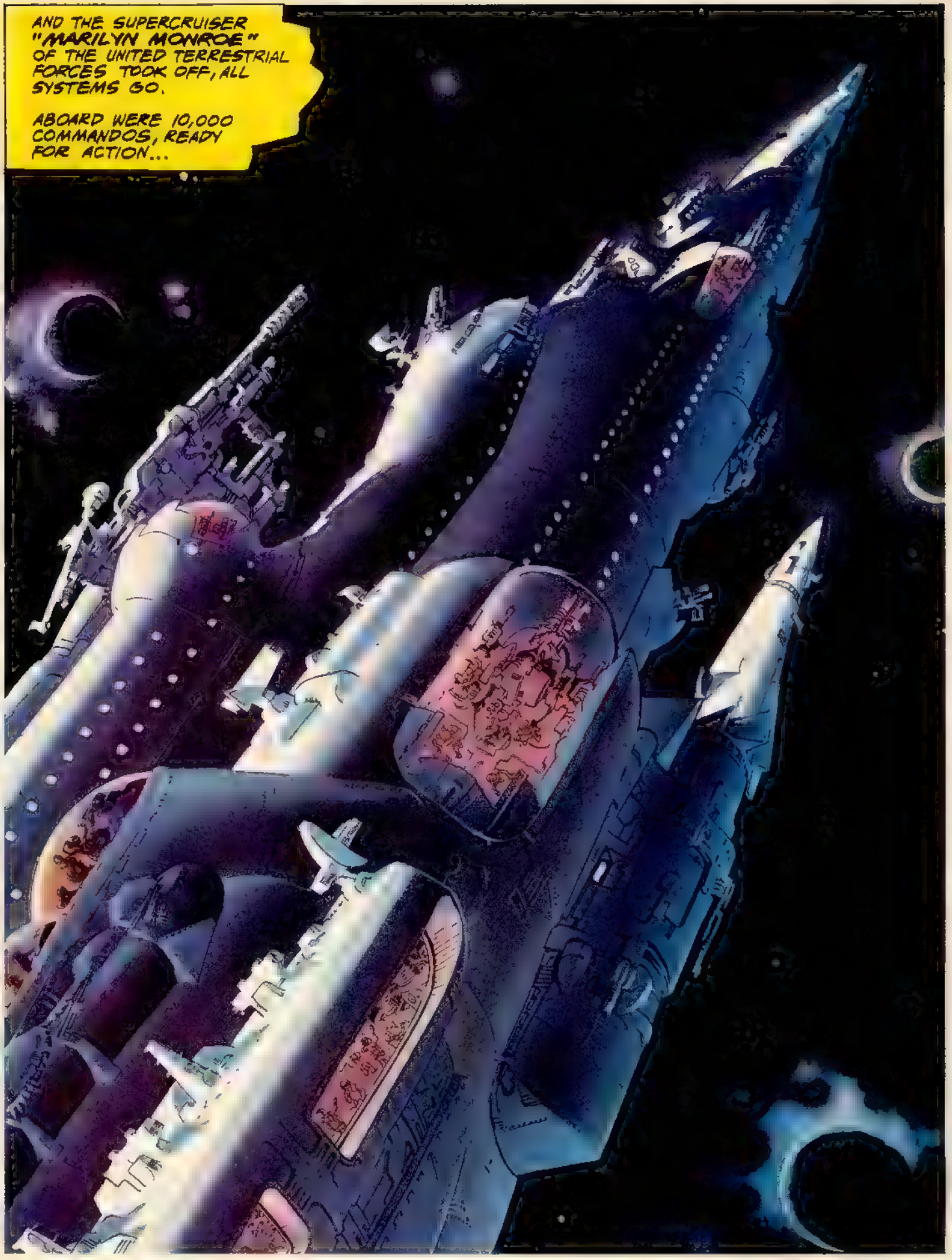
YOU HAVE ONE MINUTE TO DECIDE: THE COMMANDOS OR REFORM SCHOOL...

AT FIRST, IT WASN'T EASY. BUT I LEARNED FAST THAT I'D BEEN SCREWING UP MY OWN LIFE. THINGS WERE CHANGING, AND LITTLE BY LITTLE THE INSECURITY ZONE PUNK STARTED TO BECOME A REAL SOLDIER.

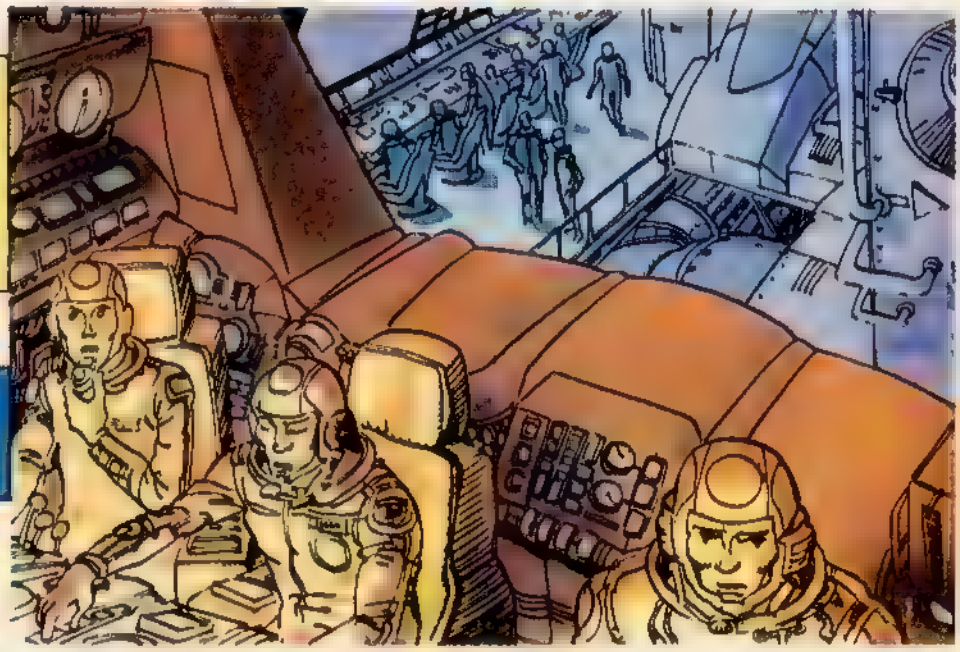
I LEARNED ADVANCED RIFLE TECH. I LEARNED TO OBEY, AND THEN TO COMMAND. THE SPACE LEGION WAS MAKING ME A MAN.

ONE DAY, THE WORD CAME DOWN. THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WAS ON RED ALERT FOR A MISSION...

COME ON! LOOK SMART! THIS ISN'T A PLEASURE CRUISE!

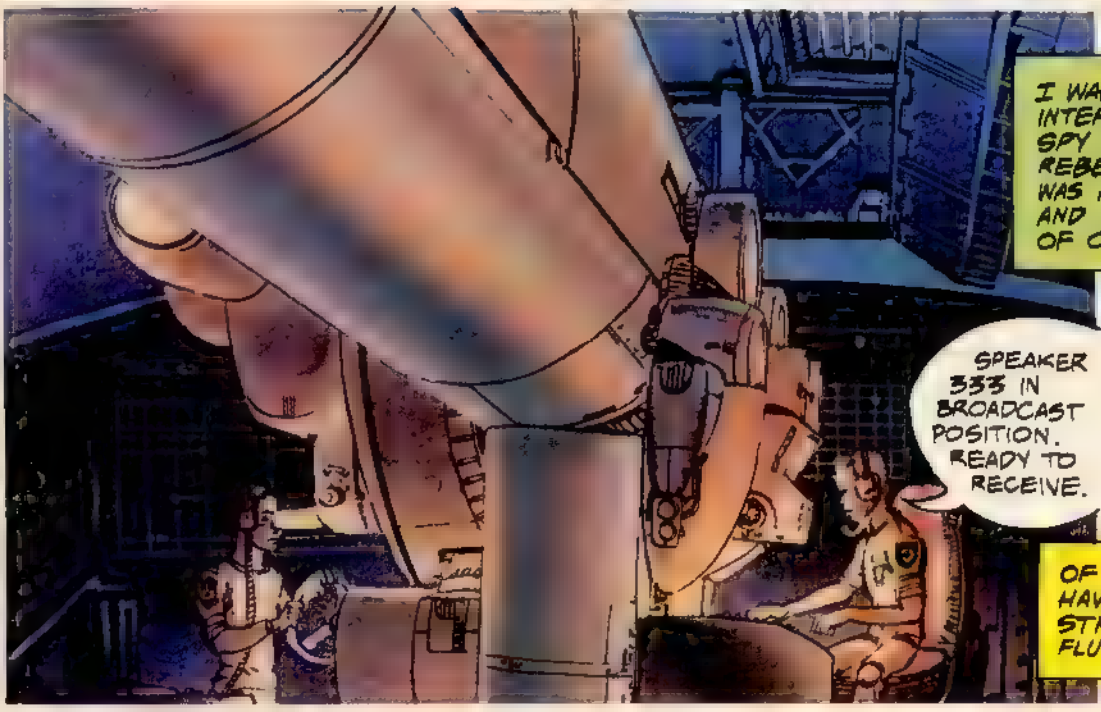

AND THE SUPERCRUISER "MARILYN MONROE" OF THE UNITED TERRESTRIAL FORCES TOOK OFF, ALL SYSTEMS GO.
ABOARD WERE 10,000 COMMANDOS, READY FOR ACTION...

MEN, WE'RE ON A COURSE FOR THE BORDERS OF THE TERRESTRIAL ORGANIZATION'S SYSTEM. THERE IS A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE TAKEN THE LOYALTY OATH TO THE TERRESTRIAL ALLIANCE. WE'RE GOING TO HELP THEM BRING BACK LAW AND ORDER...



"...AND CRUSH THE AGITATORS WHO HAVE DISTURBED THE PEACE IN THESE AREAS. YOUR JOB IS TO EXECUTE VARIOUS PACIFICATIONS AND POLICE ACTIONS FOR THE SECURITY OF OUR ALLIES. THE TERRESTRIAL ORGANIZATION IS DAMN PROUD OF YOU!"

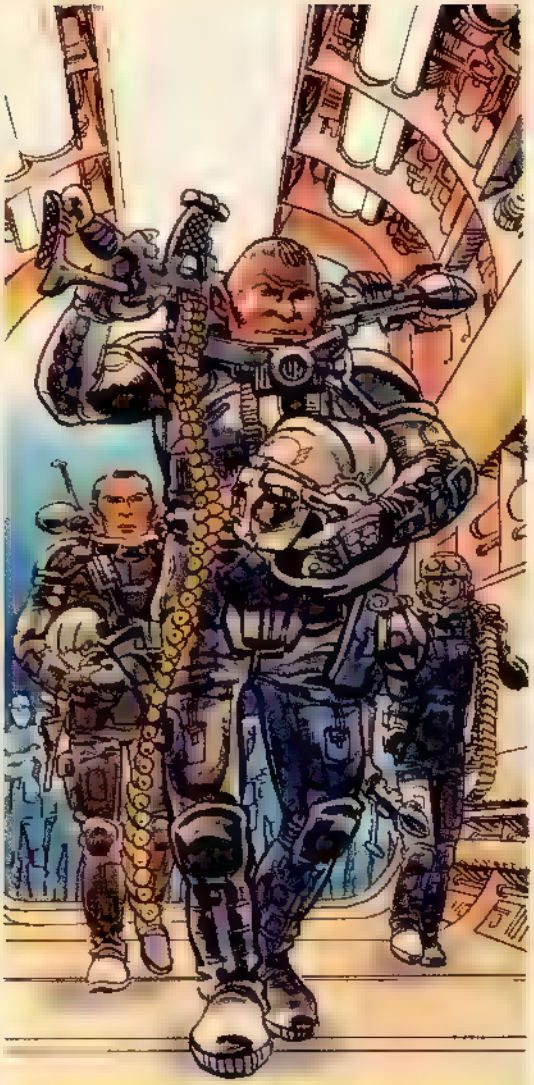
WE WERE BECOMING OPERATIONAL. THE SHIP WAS CHARGED WITH INTENSITY, EFFICIENCY. WE WERE ON A GREAT CRUSADE...



I WAS ASSIGNED TO INTERCEPTION AND DECODING SPY MESSAGES FROM THE REBEL ZONES BELOW. IT WAS A RESPONSIBLE JOB AND VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR MISSION.

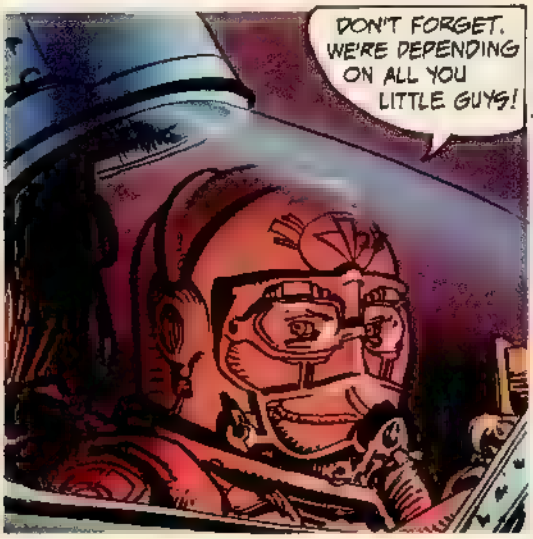
SPEAKER 333 IN BROADCAST POSITION. READY TO RECEIVE.

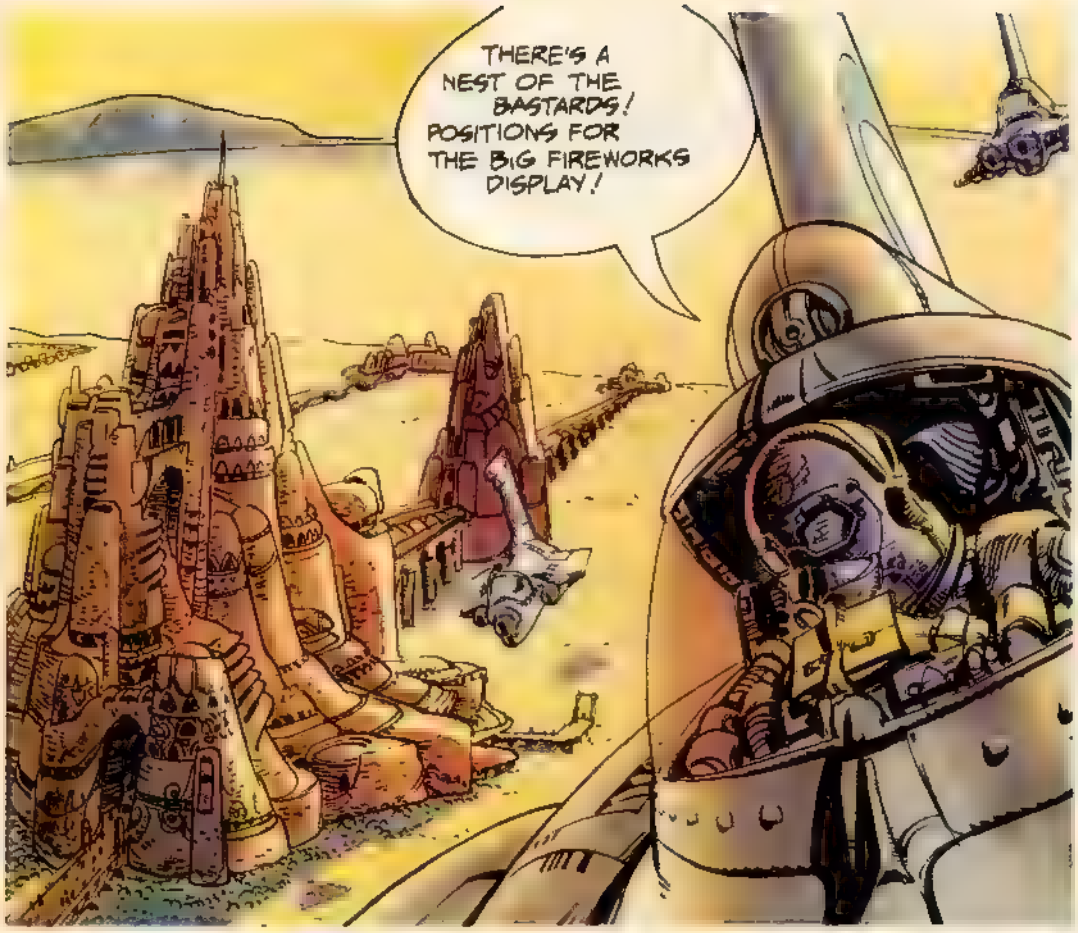
OF COURSE, I'D RATHER HAVE BEEN WITH THE STRIKE FORCE, BUT I FLUNKED MY FLIGHT TEST.



STILL, WE HAD TEAM SPIRIT, AND WE KNEW ALL THOSE GUYS WE ALL ADMIRED WERE WILLING TO SHARE IN THE GLORY.

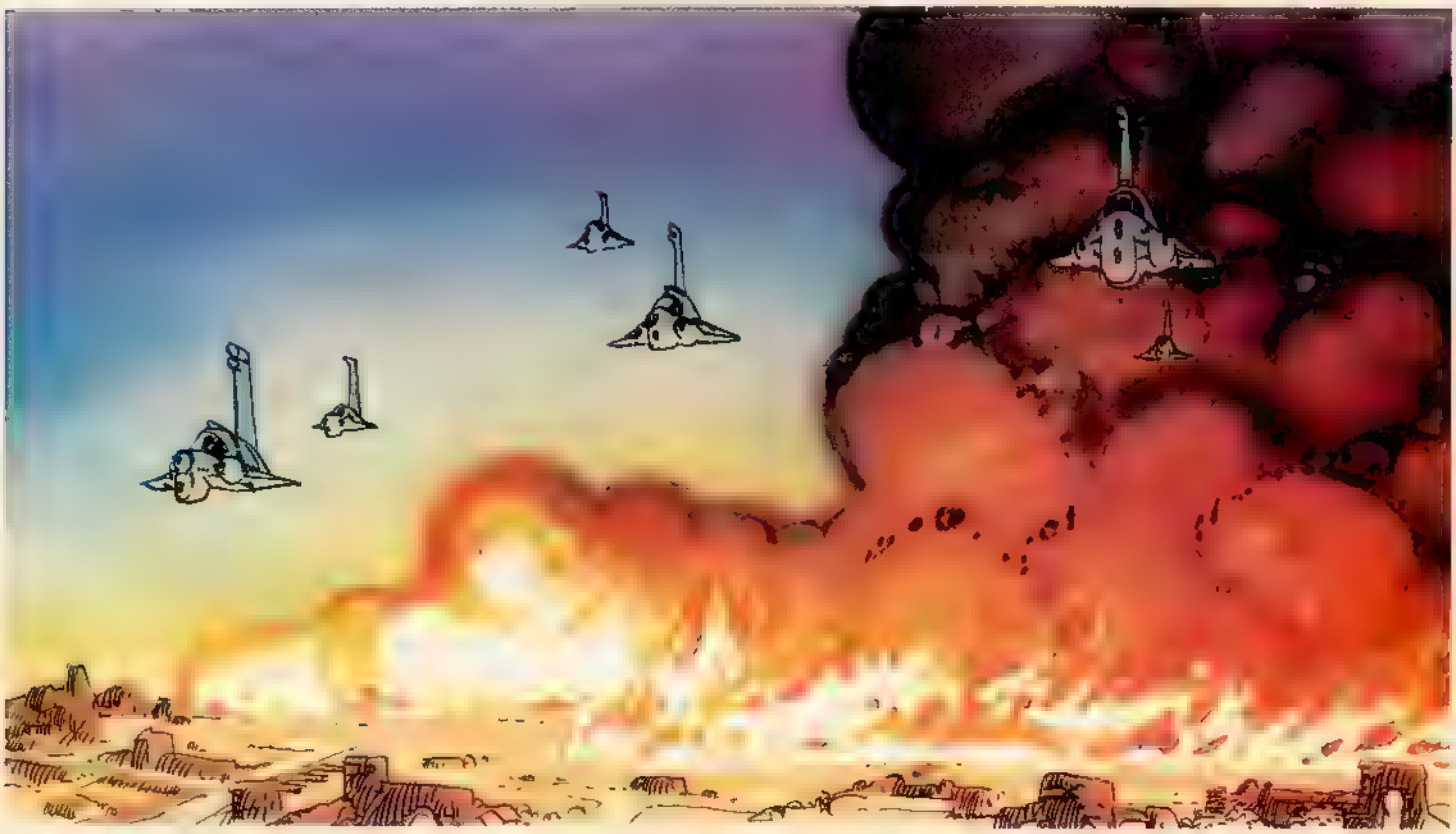
I STILL REMEMBER ONE OF THEM, CLOSING HIS COCKPIT BEFORE THE LEAP INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN, SAYING TO US:





IT WAS A LONG AND VERY EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN--A LITTLE BORING FOR THOSE OF US LEFT ORBITING IN THE BIG SHIP. THE COMMANDOS MADE FIRE STRIKES ON THE REBELS, RADIOING THE POSITIONS OF THEIR NERVE CENTERS UPSTAIRS TO US, CALLING IN A MISSILE STRIKE OR TWO.

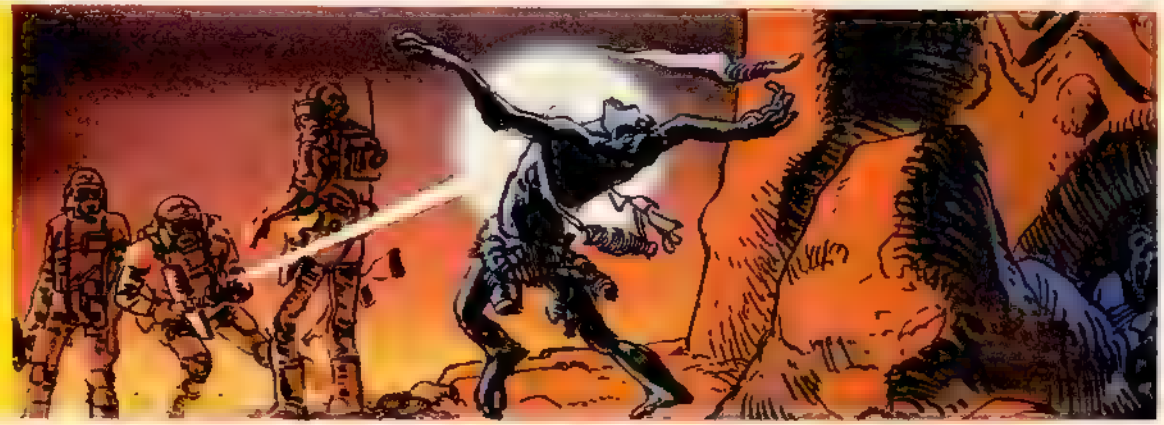
WE'D TEACH THOSE LITTLE SHITS A LESSON FOR A WHILE, AND THEN MOVE ON TO THE NEXT PLANET...



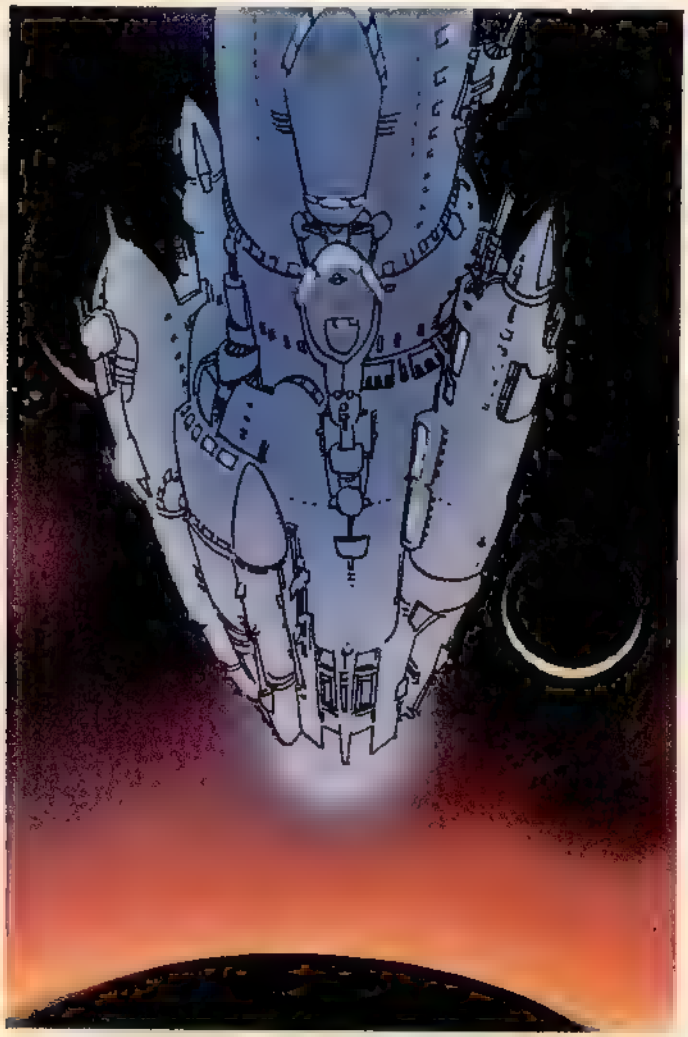
INSIDE THE SHIP, WE DIDN'T MISS ANY OF THE ACTION, THANKS TO THE TV CAMERAS FIXED TO THE WARHEADS, AND THE COLOR COMMENTARY OF THE TECHNICAL COMMANDER.

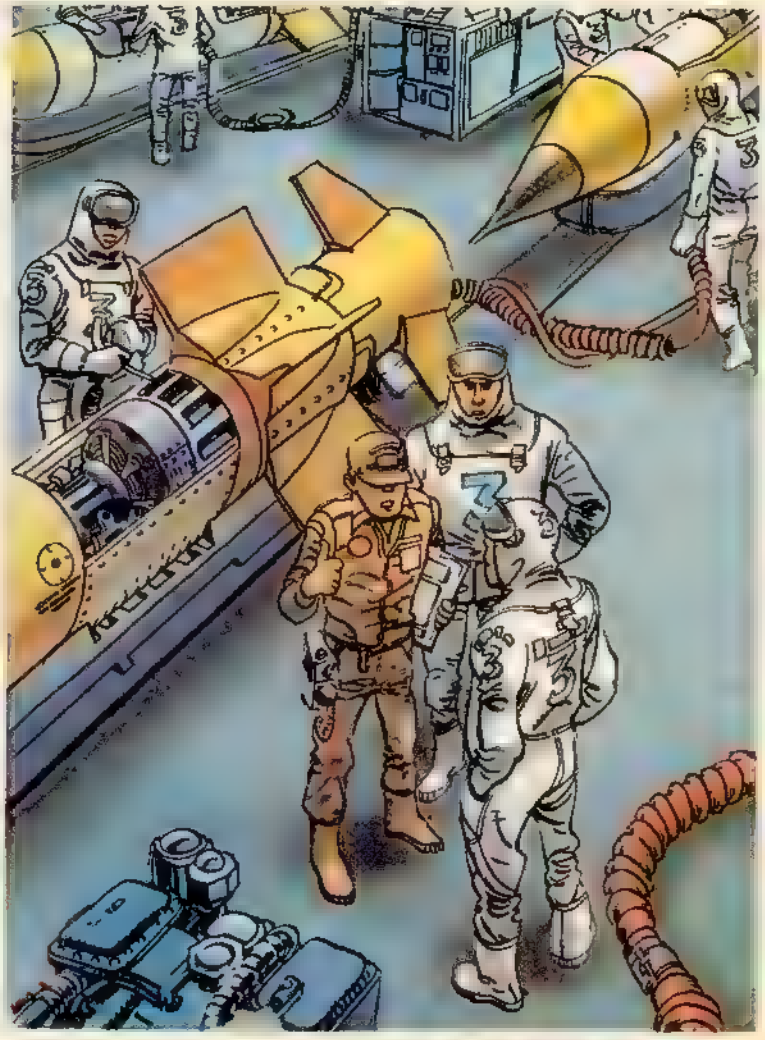
IT WAS THRILLING. ONCE EVERYTHING WAS QUIET, WE WOULD MAKE A LANDING AND RONDAYVOO WITH OUR ALLIES.

I EVEN HAD A MOMENT OF GLORY! WE WERE ON A ROUTINE PATROL WHEN SOME NUT, PROBABLY IN A STATE OF SHOCK, JUMPED ONE OF MY BUDDIES. I REACTED FAST AND ZAPPED HIM WITH A DOSE OF RAY GUN. THAT EARNED ME PERSONAL CONGRATS FROM THE COMMANDER ... AND A MEDAL!



THE EXPEDITION WENT ON FOR A WHILE. THEN WE'D SNUFFED OUT THE LAST OF THE REBELLIONS AND WE BEGAN THE LONG TRIP BACK HOME. I MUST SAY THE ATMOSPHERE ON BOARD WAS... WELL, RELIGIOUS. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT TOOK US TO SOBER UP FROM THAT PISS-OUT! FINALLY, BACK ON EARTH, I GOT PLACEMENT IN A SMALL ARMS CONCERN. THE SECURITY FOREMAN TOOK ONE LOOK AT MY REFERENCES (AND MY MEDAL) AND I LANDED A SOFT GIG AT BIG BUCKS...

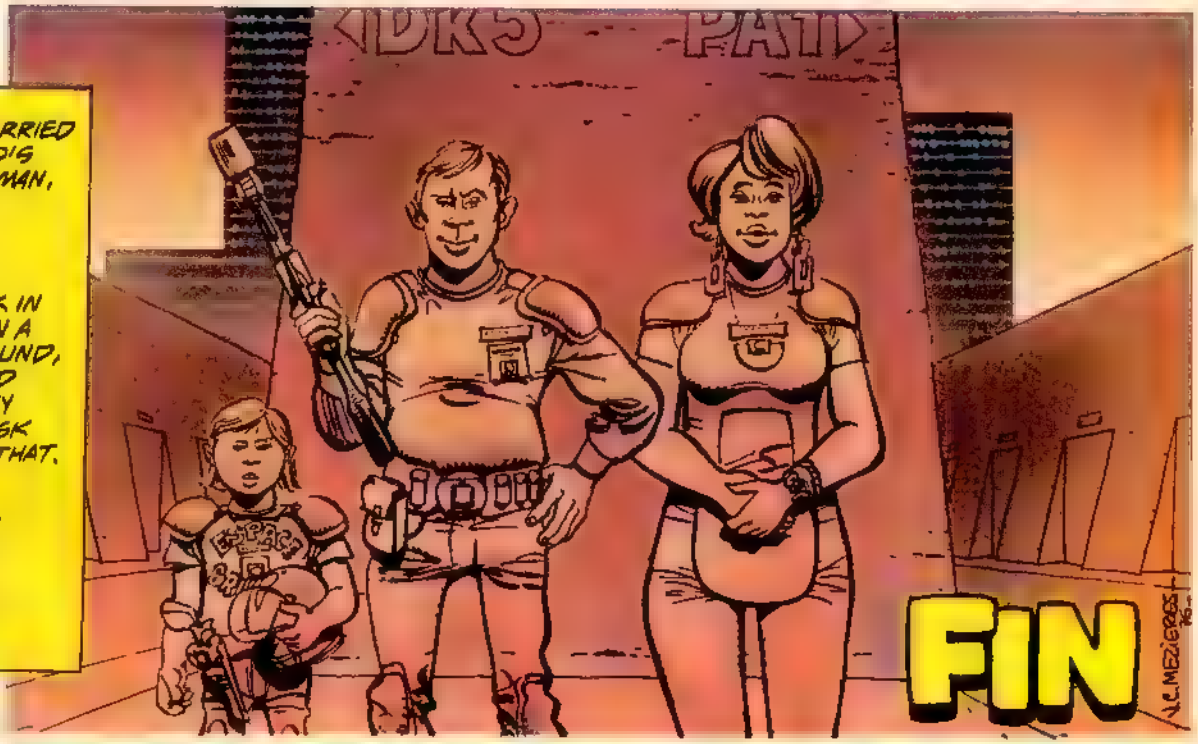




THESE DAYS, I'M A MARRIED MAN. GOT A KID WHO'S TOUGH AS HIS OLD MAN, BUT YOU BET I CAN HANDLE HIM!

WE'RE LIVING BACK IN **NEW ALBERTA**, IN A REAL NICE COMPOUND, AND I WAS ELECTED MILITIA CHIEF OF MY LEVEL. YOU CAN'T ASK FOR MORE THAN THAT.

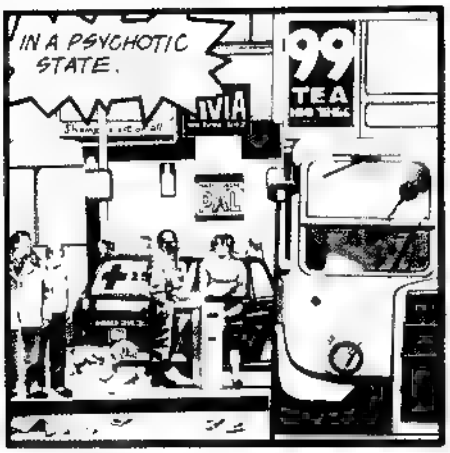
AND ALL I WANT IS A SECURE FUTURE FOR MY FAMILY... CAUSE THAT'S THE KINDA GUY I AM!

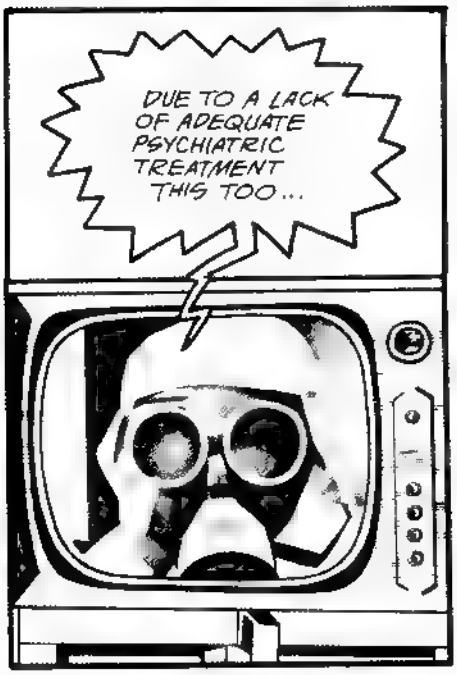


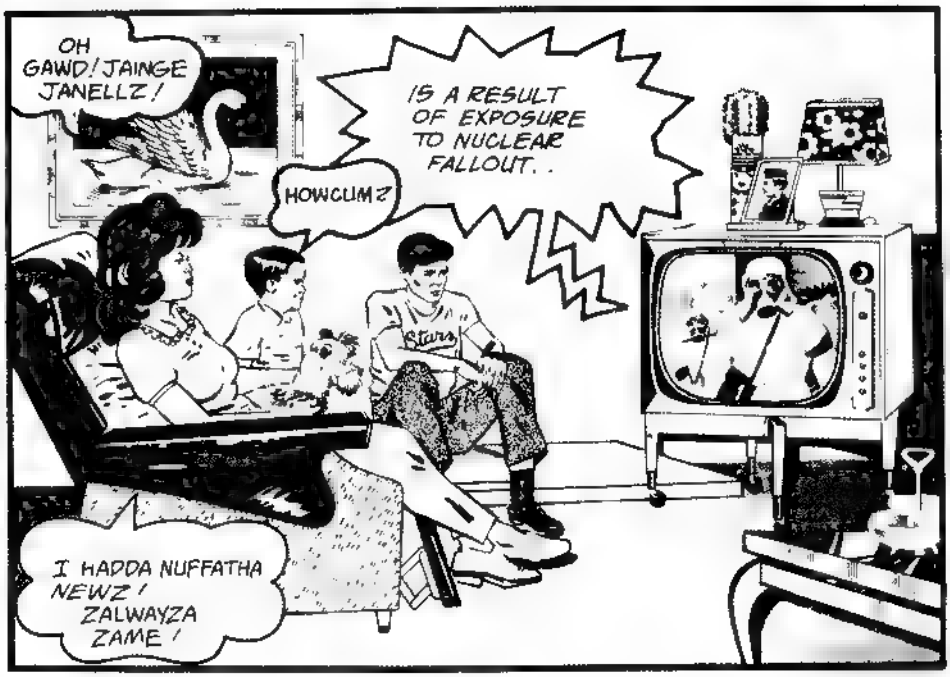
1996

MANY OF THESE PEOPLE

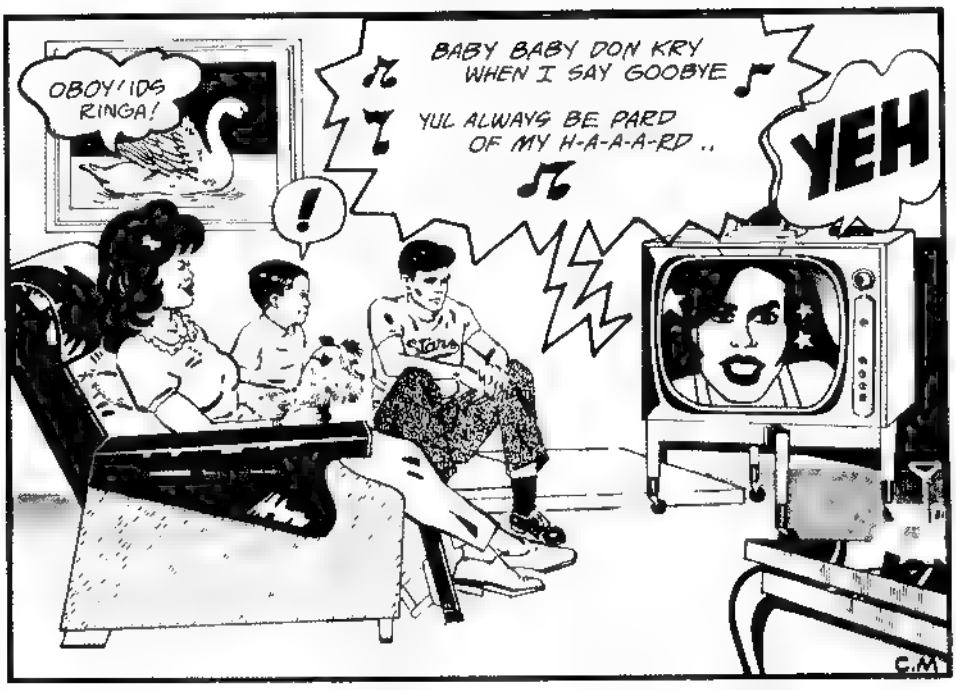
WILL DOUBT-LESS REMAIN


IN A PSYCHOTIC STATE.


DUE TO A LACK OF ADEQUATE PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT THIS TOO...


OH GAWD! JAINGE JANELLZ!
HOWCUM?
IS A RESULT OF EXPOSURE TO NUCLEAR FALLOUT..
I HADDA NUFFATHA NEWZ! ZALWAYZA ZAME!

CLIC!


OBOY! IDS RINGA!
!
BABY BABY DON KRY WHEN I SAY GOOBYE
YUL ALWAYS BE PARD OF MY H-A-A-A-RD ..
YEH
C.M.

Continued from page 57

lems of governing justly in a society where the monarch's word was the only law. Yet he felt that in his own way he was as good as any man alive Shea believed he was a man to be looked up to. Perhaps so, he thought idly, but his life to date appeared to consist of one long line of harrowing experiences and wild escapades that had served little or no constructive purpose.

The smooth, grass-covered lowlands changed to rough, barren ground, rising abruptly in small hills and dropping sharply into steep, trenchlike valleys that made travel slow and almost hazardous in places. Menion looked anxiously ahead for some indication of more level terrain, but it was impossible to see very far, even from the top of the steep rises. He plodded on, deliberately and steadily, ignoring the roughness of the ground and silently berating his decision to come that way. His mind wandered briefly, then suddenly snapped back as he caught the sound of a human voice. He listened intently for several seconds, but could hear nothing further and dismissed it as the wind or his imagination. A moment later he heard it again, only this time it was the clear sound of a woman's voice, singing softly somewhere ahead of him, faint and low. He walked more quickly, wondering if his ears were playing tricks on him, but all the time hearing the woman's mellow voice grow louder. Soon the mesmeric sound of her singing filled the air in a gay, almost wild abandon that reach into the innermost depths of the highlander's mind, bidding him to follow, to be as free as the song itself. Almost in a trance he walked steadily on, smiling broadly at the images the happy song conjured up to him. Vaguely, he wondered what a woman would be doing in these bleak lowlands, miles from any kind of civilization, but the song seemed to dispel all his doubts in its warm assurance that it came from the heart

At the peak of a particularly bleak rise, somewhat higher than the surrounding hillocks, Menion found her sitting beneath a small twisted tree with long, gnarled branches that reminded him of willow roots. She was a young girl, very beautiful and obviously very much at home in these lands as she sang brightly, seemingly oblivious to anyone who might be attracted by the sound of her voice. He did not conceal his approach, but moved straight to her side, smiling gently at her freshness and youth She smiled back at him, but made no effort to rise nor to greet him, continuing the gay strains of the tune she had been singing all this time. The Prince of Leah came to a halt several feet away from her, but she quickly beckoned him to come closer and sit next to her beneath the odd-shaped tree. It was then that from somewhere deep within him a small warning nerve twinged, some sixth sense not yet entranced by her vibrant song tugged at him and demanded to know why this young girl should ask a complete stranger to sit with her There was no reason for his hesitation other than perhaps the innate distrust the hunter has for all things out of place and time in nature; but whatever the reason, it caused the highlander to pause. In that instant the girl and the song disappeared into vapor, leaving Menion to face the strange-looking tree on the barren rise.

For one second Menion hesitated, unable to believe what had just occurred, and then hastily moved to withdraw. But the loose ground about his feet opened even as he paused, releasing a heavy cluster of thick-gnarled roots which wound themselves tightly about the young man's ankles, holding him fast Menion stumbled over backward trying to break free. For a moment he found his predicament to be ludicrous. But try as he might, he could not work free of those clinging roots. The strangeness of the situation increased almost immediately as he glanced up to see the strange root-limbed tree, previously immobile, approaching in a slow, stretching motion, its limbs extended toward him, their tips containing small but deadly-looking needles. Thoroughly aroused now, Menion dropped his pack and bow in one motion and unsheathed the great sword, realizing that the girl and the song had been an illusion to draw him within reach of this ominous tree. He cut briefly at the roots which bound him, severing them in places, but the work was slow because they were wound so tightly about his ankles that he could not risk broad strokes. Sudden panic set in as he realized he could not get free in time, but he forced the feeling down and shouted his defiance at the plant, which by now was almost on top of him. Swinging in fury as it came within reach, he quickly severed a number of the clutching limbs and it withdrew slightly, its whole frame shuddering in pain. Menion knew that with its next approach he had to strike its nerve center if he expected to destroy it. But the strange tree had other ideas, coiling its limbs into itself, it thrust them toward the imprisoned traveler one at a time, showering him with the tiny needles that flew off the ends. Many of them missed altogether and some bounced harmlessly off his heavy tunic and boots But others struck the exposed skin of his hands and head and embedded themselves with small stinging sensations. Menion tried to brush them off, while protecting himself from further assault, but the little needles broke off, leaving their tips embedded in his skin. He felt a kind of slow drowsiness begin to steal over him and portions of his nervous system begin to go numb. He realized at once that the needles contained some sort of drug that was designed to put the plant's victim to sleep, to render it helpless for easy disposition Wildly, he fought the feeling seeping through his system, but soon dropped helplessly to his knees, unable to fight it, knowing that the tree had won

But amazingly, the deadly tree appeared to hesitate and then to inch slightly backward, coiling again in attack. Slow, heavy footsteps sounded behind the fallen prince, approaching cautiously He could not turn his head to see who it was, and a deep bass voice warned him abruptly to remain motionless. The tree coiled expectantly to strike, but an instant before it released its deadly needles, it was struck with shattering impact by a huge mace that flew over the shoulder of the fallen Menion. The strange tree was completely toppled by the blow. Obviously injured, it struggled to raise itself and fight back. Behind him, Menion heard the sharp release of a bow-string and a long black arrow embedded itself deep within the plant's thick trunk. Immediately the roots about his feet released their grip and sank into the earth and the main portion of the tree shuddered violently, limbs thrashing the air and showering needles in all directions A moment later, it drooped slowly to the earth. With a final spasm, it lay motionless.

Still heavily drugged from the needles, Menion felt the strong hands of his rescuer grip his shoulders roughly and force him into a prone position while a broad hunting knife severed the few remaining strands binding his feet. The figure before him was a powerfully built Dwarf, dressed in the green and brown woodsman's clothing worn by most of that race. He was tall for a Dwarf, a little over five feet, and carried a small arsenal of weapons bound about his broad waist. He looked down at the drugged Menion and shook his head dubiously.

"You must be a stranger to do a dumb thing like that," he reprimanded the other in his deep bass voice. "Nobody with any sense plays around with the Sirens."

"I am from Leah... to the west," Menion managed to gasp out, his voice thick and strange to his own ears.

"A highlander—I might have known." The Dwarf laughed heartily to himself. "You'd have to be, I suppose. Well, don't worry, you'll be fine in a few days. That drug won't kill you if we get it treated, but you'll be out for a while "

He laughed again and turned to retrieve his mace. Menion, with his final ounce of strength, grasped him by the tunic.

"I must reach... the Anar... Culhaven," he gasped sharply. "Take me to Balinor..."

The Dwarf looked back at him sharply, but Menion had lapsed into unconsciousness. Muttering to himself, the Dwarf picked up his own weapons and those of the fallen highlander. Then with surprising strength, he heaved the limp form of Menion over his broad shoulders, testing the load for balance. Satisfied at last that all was in place, he began trudging steadily, muttering all the while, moving toward the forests of the Anar.

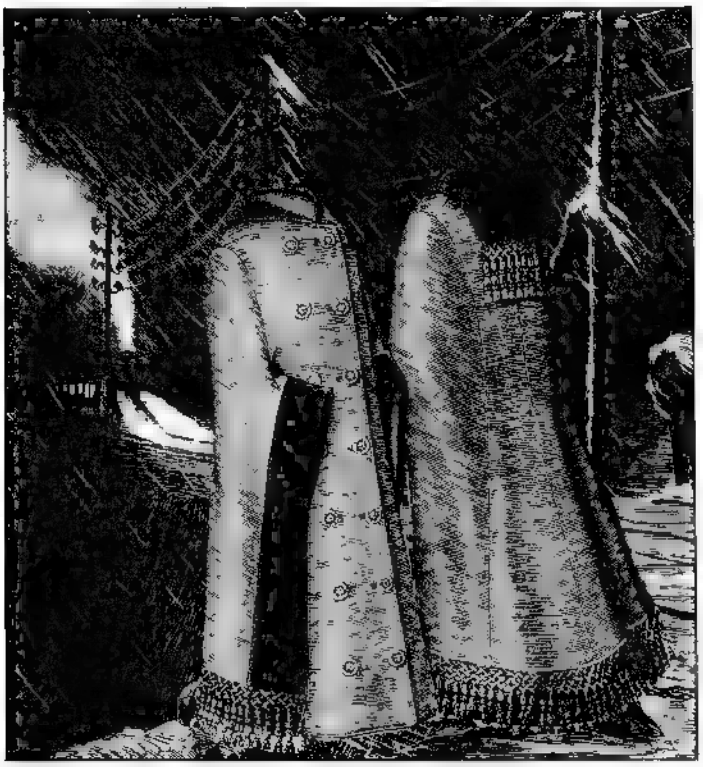
AGE OF AGES

A GOTHIC SCIENCE-FICTION TRIP TO THE APOCALYPSE

by
Akbar Del Piombo

Collages by
Norman Rubington

The first sign of a drastically altering world came from a strange report that Dante and Virgil had made their way back from Hell..

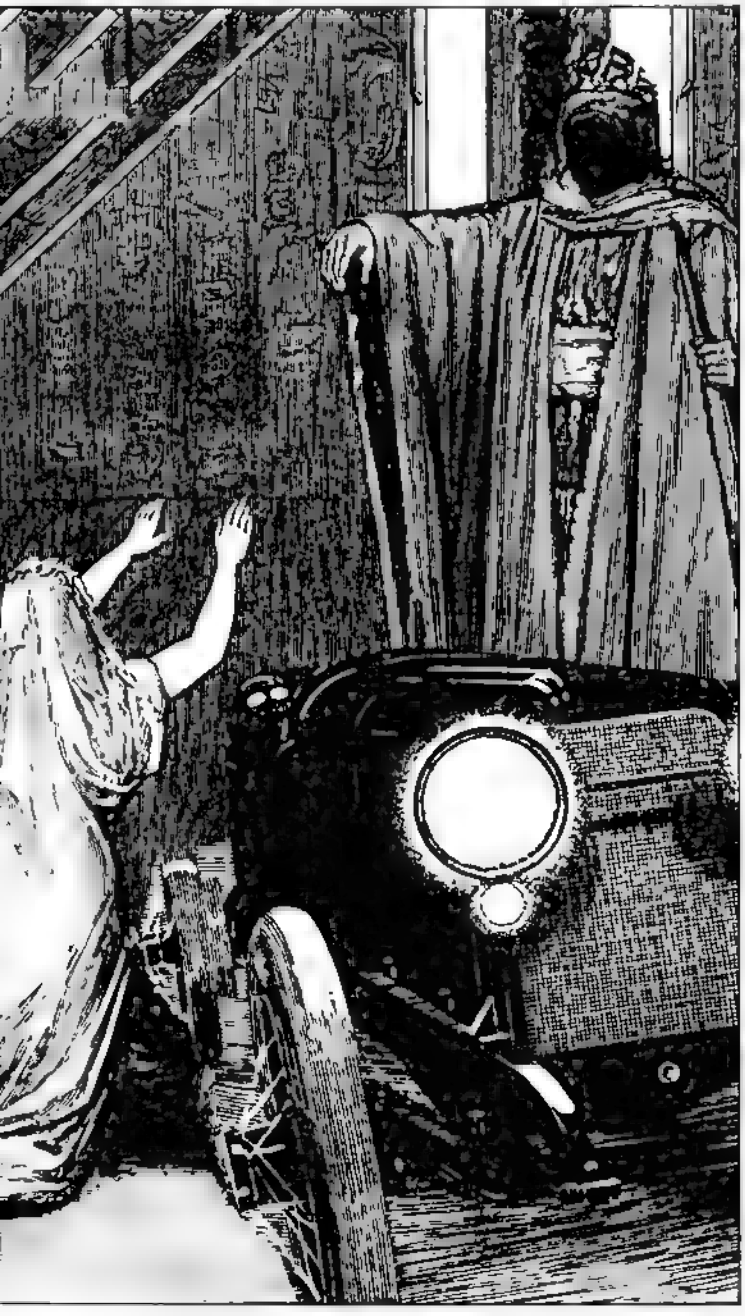


Another had Hannibal lost in the Rockies, retracing his way across the Alps

An unidentified Roman returned to his ancient haunts, heralding the Age of Nostalgia

In the skies of California a sign from the Zodiac alerted a waiting cult to the coming of their Messiah

The influx of all manner of extraterrestrials escalated and the humblest abode strained its resources for oil to anoint its chosen divinity



The pace accelerated, and the word was Jonah had surfaced off Malibu Beach

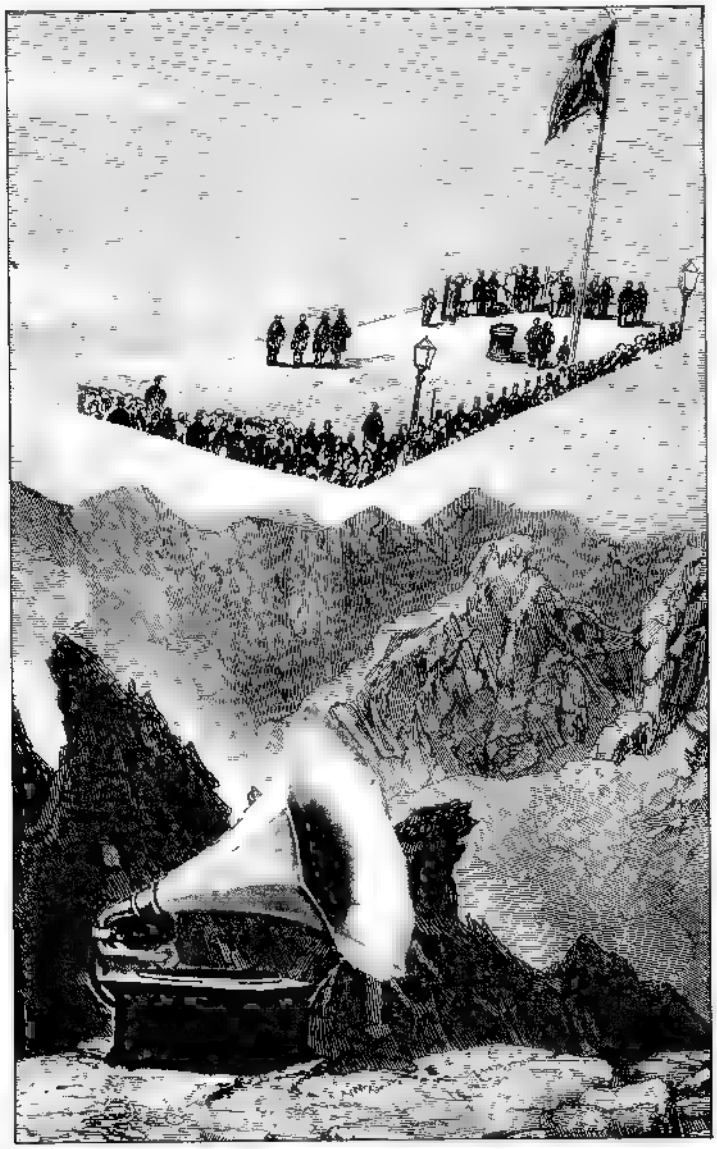
Experts spoke of a time warp when Atlantis rose briefly in the vicinity of New Jersey. The resinking of the legendary continent sparked rumors of mass hallucination rousing the righteous anger of Hobokenites

Things were not what they seemed, and people were seeing *things* everywhere

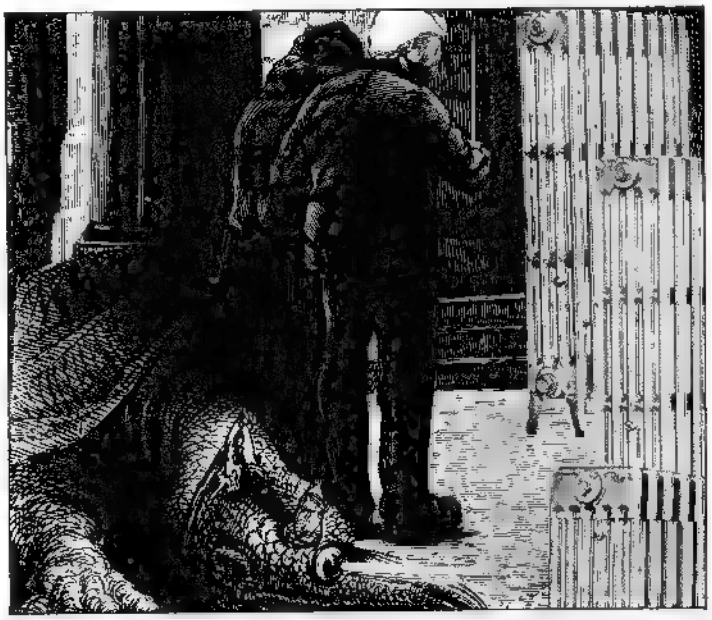
Archetype of a new gobal man, Sir Edwin Fuzz, Scotland Yard's ace dick, ponders an awesome question. Has the battle for men's minds been won? And if so, by whom? Chief of the ultra-secret PI** (*), he maintains silence at the bizarre reports and the laughter of his fe low club members, amused at his colonial headgear The quaint relic with a fortune of electronic wizardry, connects him to the underground network of PI***

(*)PLANETARY INTELLIGENCE SURVEY SYSTEM, or PISS for which the abbreviated form, PI**

There was
The flying victuals were droppings from a stupendous achievement the first earth colony to orbit the planet The prize real estate, billed as a "heavenly plot," was launched with a song hit, "*The Future is Now.*" Science-fiction was no more

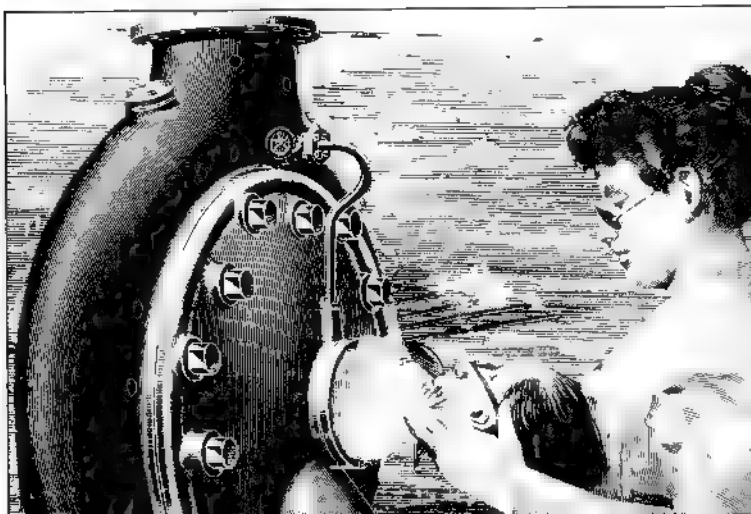


A PI** agent radios an incredible fish story of a school of bloaters over Paris en route to Nice "Bloody weird!" thinks Sir Edwin "Unless nature is going as mad as men, for this there *has* to be reason."



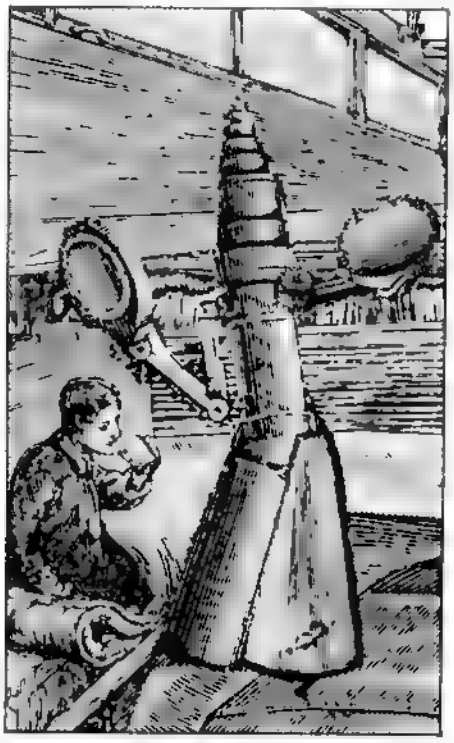
It was part of the spectacular Ode to Progress Expo, revealing the future to young and old A smattering of creeps amongst the visitors was no cause for alarm, their numbers being proportional to the rise in population

The sensation of the show was a new genus, born *in vitro*
The first of the "pre-fabs," a suave, mature product issues with assembly-line efficiency from a prodigious vulva, sans contractions, noise, or pain



Prizewinners of the "Proxy Generation" Scandinavia's au pair girl (right), a blue ribbon first generation model (left) Britain's runner-up, second generation butler and cut babysitter

Not on view was another generation, unpublicized and developed in secret. With their last screw in place, a proto body of warriors execute meticulous close-order drill The military is enthralled The ideal of bloodless conflict is at hand



And so the stage was set for the Main Event
As predicted, Big Brother took over
Big in every way, he came walking tall from God's country, the patron saint of Texas, and on taking office, took the vow of silence in an electrifying speech (Below Press secretary records the unusual inaugural that brought the world to a standstill)

His first act was to declare the Millenium It was a *coup de theâtre* that turned the tables on everything that had been said before, but wild rumors flew of a warlock in the White House There were leaks that he did more than just commune with nature and talk to plants

To be continued...

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1996

BABY BABY DON CRY

WHEN I SAY GOOBYE ..
YUL ALWAYS BE PARD OF MY H-A-A-A-RD
GED GOIN' HEYAH?!

WON SOF KAREZZ SUM TENERNEZZ .

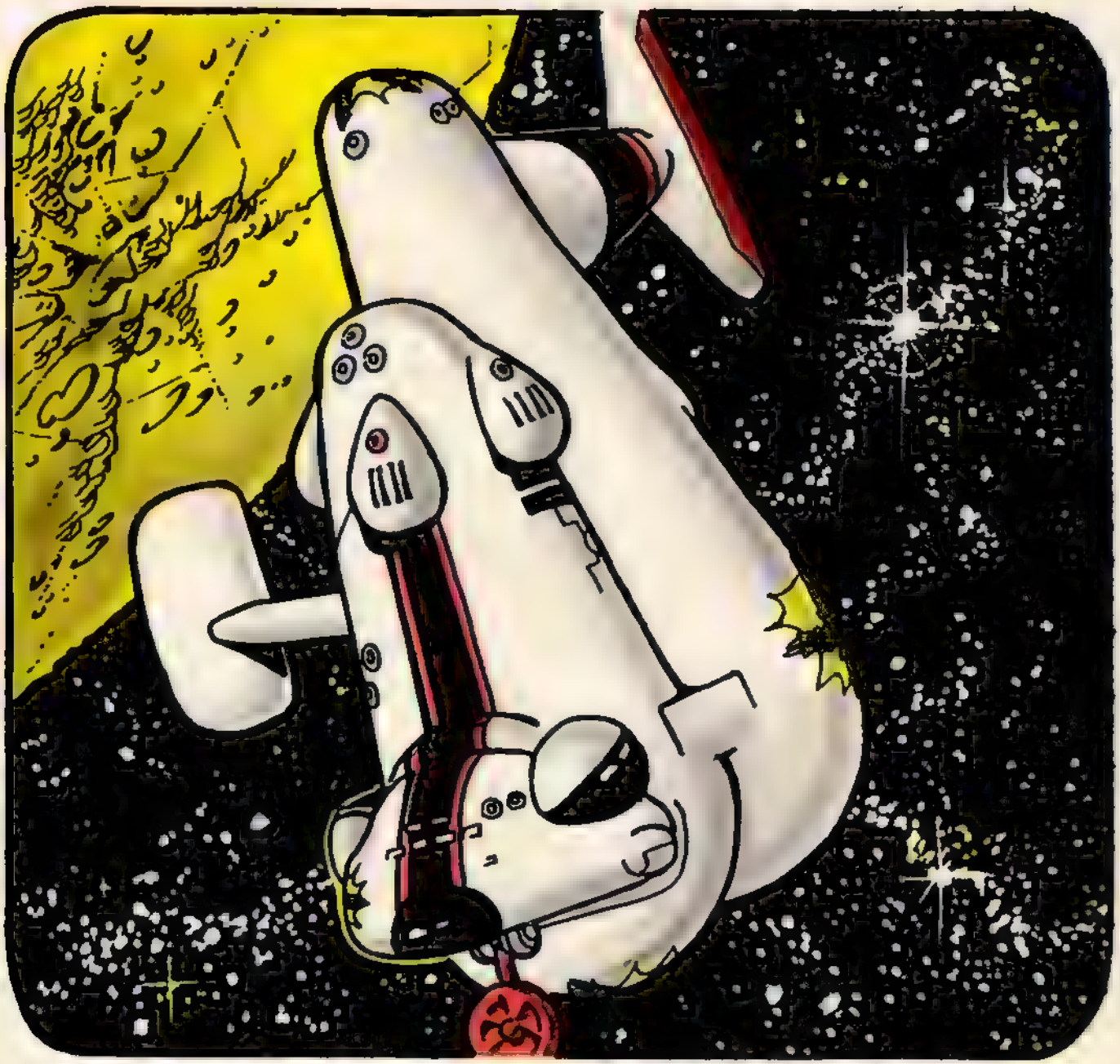
AN THEN WE HAV TO PARD
OUT
BUT WEN ID ENZ
PLOYEES ONLY

BILLIARD ROOM
DAM FERNER!
CAND WE BE FRENZ .
CM/1996

CAND WE BE FRENZ

SUNPOT

by VAUGHN BODĒ



SUNPOT VIEWS

SUNPOT SIZES

THC (Trunk Line Head Cabin)
Height: 75 ft./w/dish down (70) 145 - Dish dia. 55 ft.
Length: 180 ft. - Rocket Plug 22 ft. - Blisters 65 ft. - Pod 30 ft. - Port 10 ft.
Width: 135 ft.

HPS (Habitation and Production Silo) / N SILO
Height: 80 ft./front fort 65 ft., 45 ft. wide/wide
22 ft. high/90 ft. long
Width: 112(bottom)-134(top forts)
Length: 112 center - top 50 ft.

PF Power Factory
Height: 360 ft./fin 112 ft.
Length: 90 ft. bottom/at center 112/ top 50/ boom and antenna 135 ft.
Width: 134 bottom/65 top

THC/HPS & PF
Length: 405 ft.
Height: 405 ft./w/THC dish down 450 ft.

BELINDA BUMP

A robust, busty, 4-foot high pile of sex. Dr. Electric's pick of the 13 luscious falsies on-board the Sunpot Planet.

ELECTRIC BEE

A standard force of 25 Electric Bees patrol Sunpot acting as a police force or as body guards for Dr. Electric.

FARKFOOT

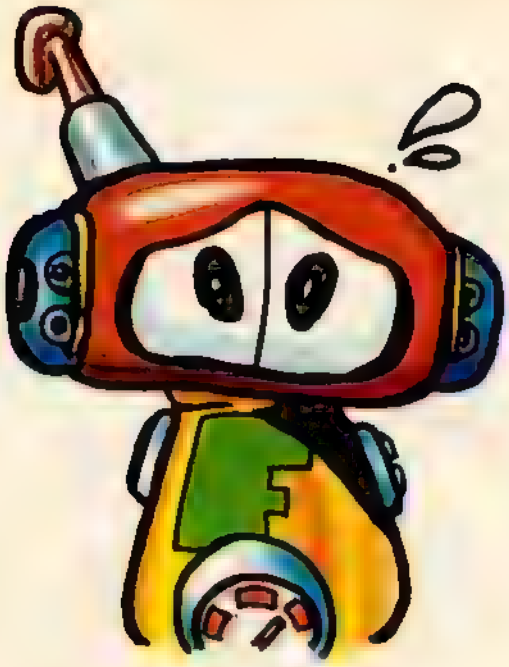
The ship's foreman, Dr. Electric's first synthetic, which he considers a failure. Farkfoot is tolerated for nostalgia's sake.

SCREWBOSS

About 100 of these practical, business-like machines oversee the lesser bright things like screws, coakers and stuff.

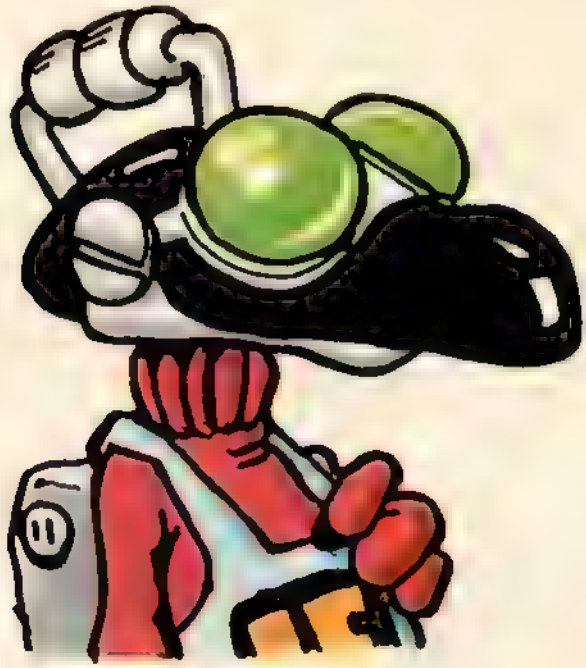
SCREWS

At least 1,000 screw machines make up the main body of the crew. Screws are cheap, easily expendable and stupid.



FUEL SCREWS

Fifty complete, ready-for-burning fuel screws are kept on board at all times. They are very unstable personalities.



COAKERS

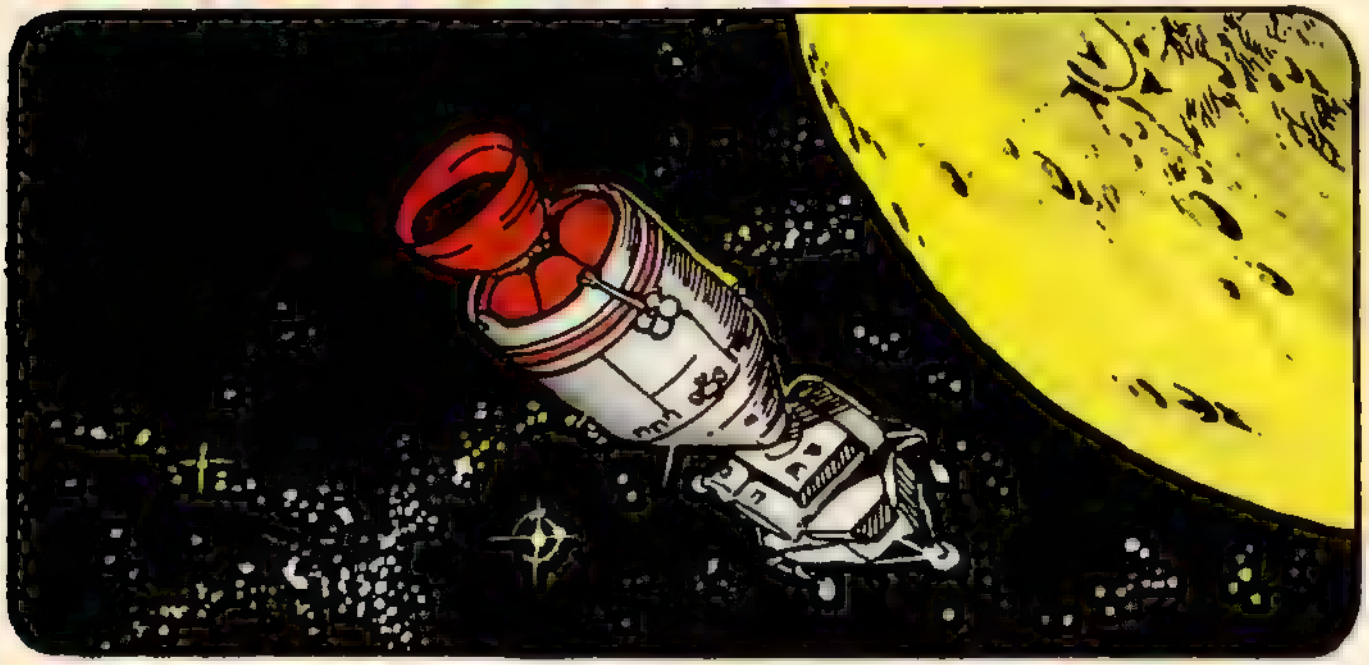
400 coakers work menial tasks on Sunpot like washing dishes, being servants and things. They are black and, therefore, have no rights.

LIZARDS

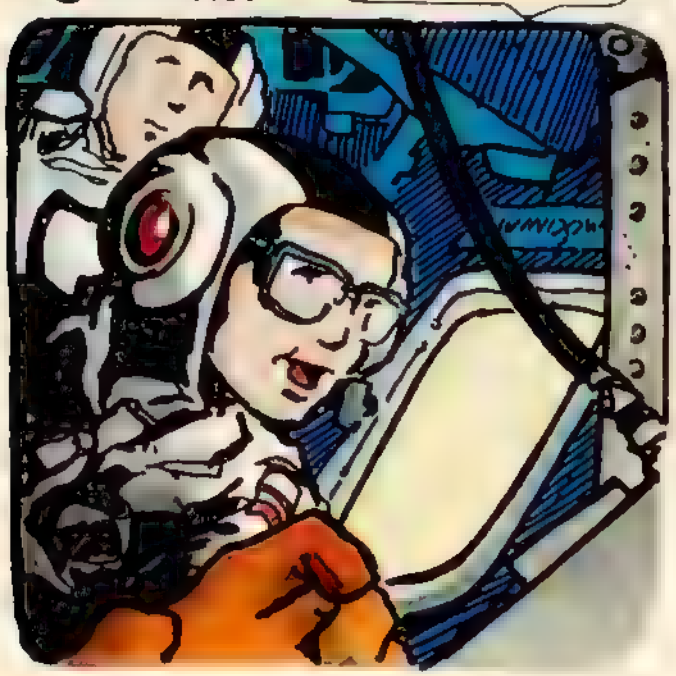
Lizards, about 100, are the scientists and technicians and idiots indispensable to Sunpot's operation.

CHAPTER 1

OUT IN THE SUNNY VACUUMS OF ETERNAL AFTERNOON ALMOST TO THE MOON, ALMOST INTO ORBIT, GOES A NEW APOLLO. IT FALLS TOWARD THE QUIET, MASSIVE MONSTER AND ANOTHER LANDING FOR MAN....



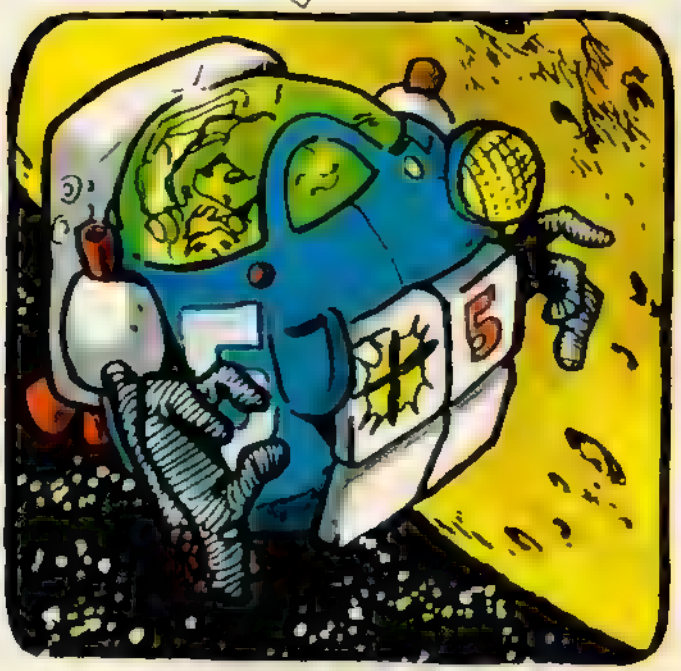
THE JUNIOR PILOT SEES A BRIGHT, FLIPPING OBJECT PASS A MILE BELOW.. IT IS QUICKLY LOST IN BRILLIANCE..

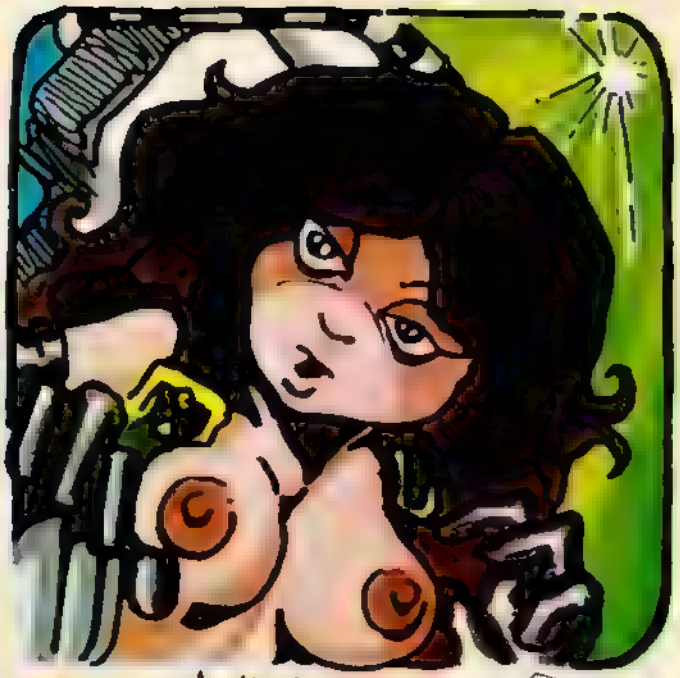


HELL, WHAT YOU PROBABLY SAW WAS A FLICK OF ALUMINUM PACKING FROM THE LEM...

WHAT HE SAW WAS NO FLICK OF FLAKE, NOR MOON SATELLITE.. WHAT HE SAW WAS A BEAN WITH HANDS!!

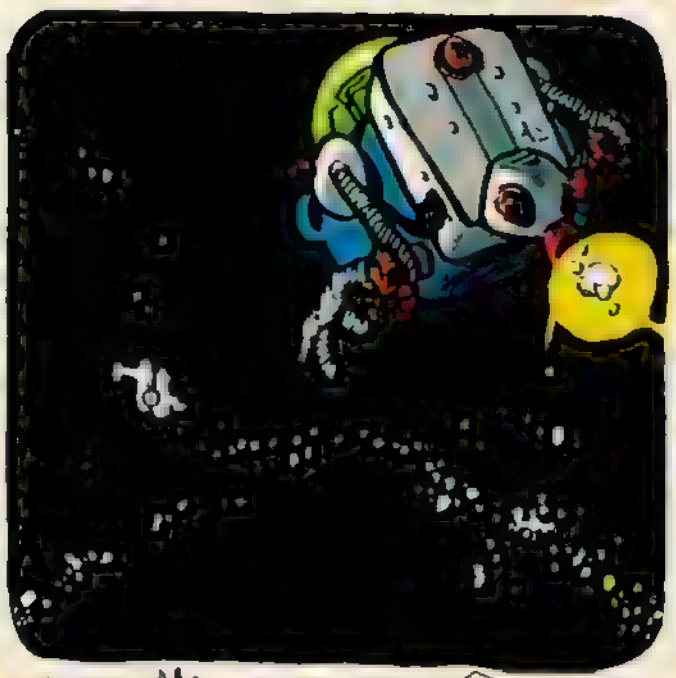
SUNPOT, SHIP, THIS IS, BELINDA BUMP, IN BODY BEAN FIVE... I HAD TO ABANDON THE LOUSY DAMN BOUY POD TRANSMITTER!.. AN AMERICAN APOLLO IS RIGHT BEHIND ME!

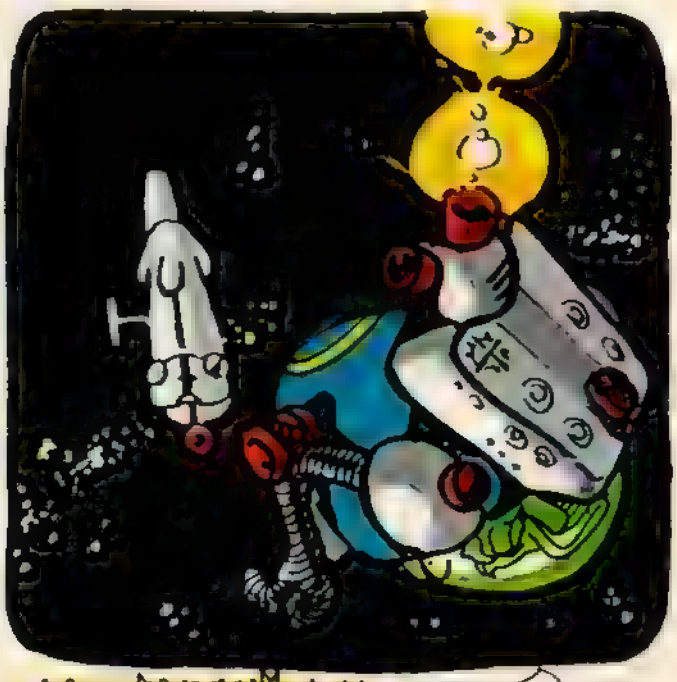




OKAY, NECTAR NIPPLES, DIS IS DR. ELECTRIC ON DA HORN, WHAT'S THA' PROBLUM?

AN APOLLO, YOU MECHANICAL WASP!! IT'S GOIN' INTO ORBIT, IT WILL SEE THE BLOODY SHIP!!



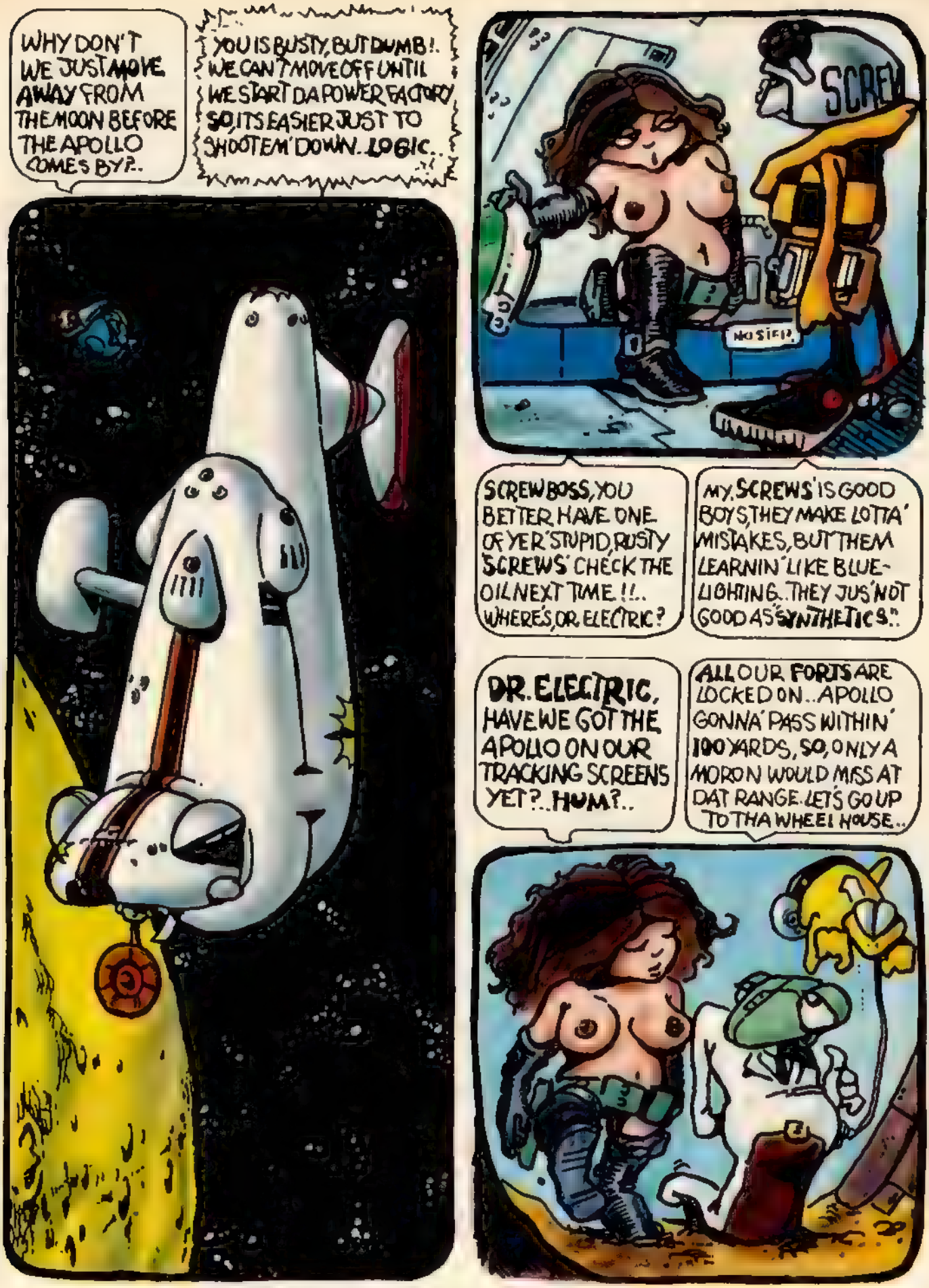


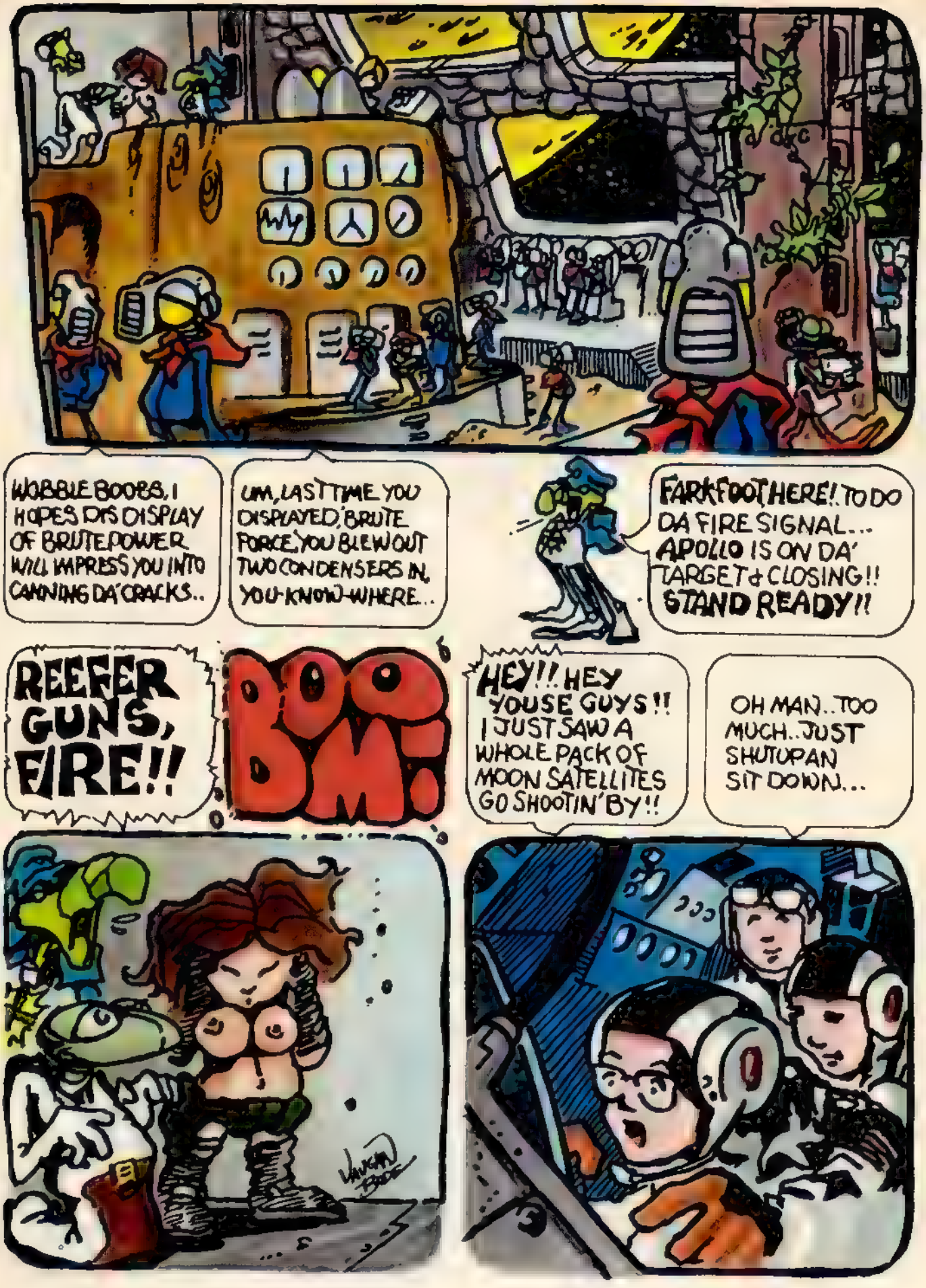
EASY WIF DA' NAMES, SWEET-HEART OR I'LL CUT OFF YOUR BUBBLE BATH ALLOTMENT.

YOU BATTERY OPERATED PYTHON, THIS IS NO TIME FOR YOUR STATIC HUMOR, DO SOMETHING!!

BELINDA, BABE, I AM JUST TALKING TO FARKFOOT, HE THINKS WE SHOULD SHOOT DOWN DA' APOLLO...

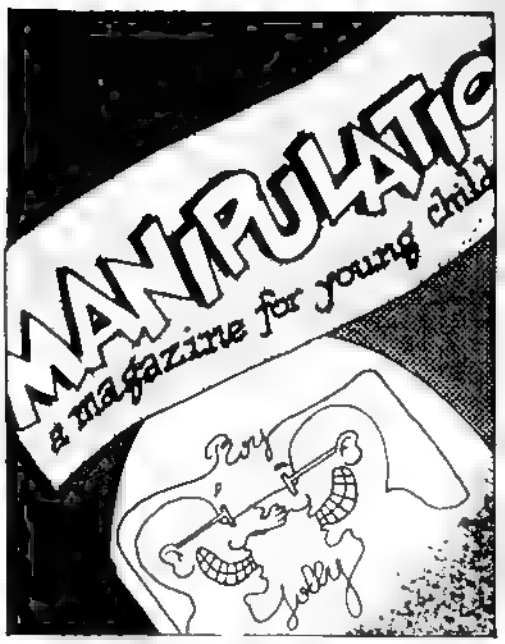
GOOD IDEA!

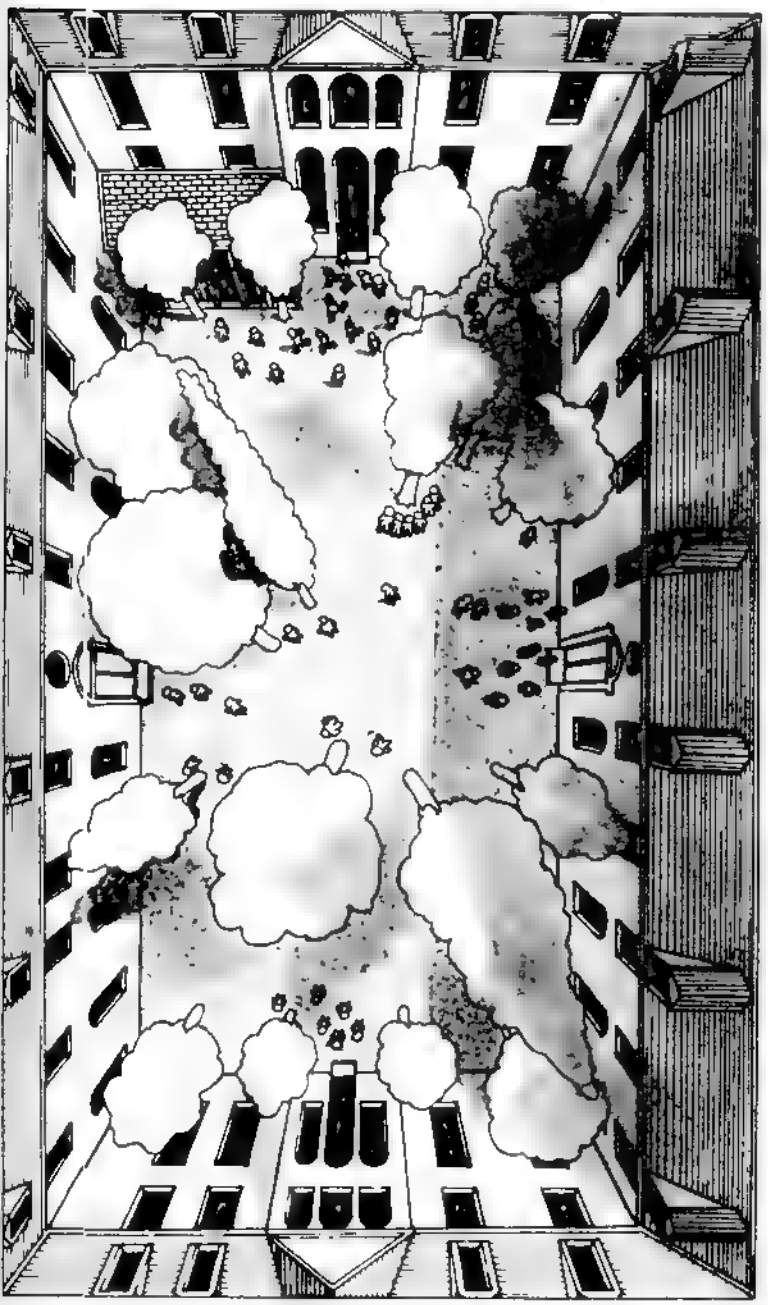

WHY DON'T WE JUST MOVE AWAY FROM THE MOON BEFORE THE APOLLO COMES BY?..
YOU IS BUSTY, BUT DUMB!.. WE CAN'T MOVE OFF UNTIL WE START DA POWER FACTORY SO, ITS EASIER JUST TO SHOOTEM' DOWN. LOGIC..
SCREW
SCREWBOSS, YOU BETTER HAVE ONE OF YER 'STUPID, RUSTY 'SCREWS' CHECK THE OIL NEXT TIME!!.. WHERE'S, OR ELECTRIC?
MY, SCREWS' IS GOOD BOYS, THEY MAKE LOTTA' MISTAKES, BUT THEM LEARNIN' LIKE BLUE-LIGHTING.. THEY JUS' NOT GOOD AS "SYNTHETICS"..
DR. ELECTRIC, HAVE WE GOT THE APOLLO ON OUR TRACKING SCREENS YET?.. HUM?..
ALL OUR FORTS ARE LOCKED ON.. APOLLO GONNA' PASS WITHIN' 100 YARDS, SO, ONLY A MORON WOULD MISS AT DAT RANGE. LET'S GO UP TO THA WHEEL HOUSE..

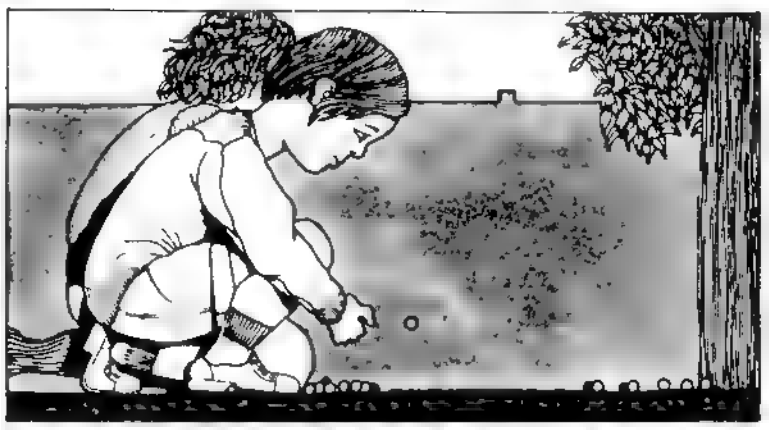

WOBBLE BOOBS, I HOPES DIS DISPLAY OF BRUTE POWER WILL IMPRESS YOU INTO CANNING DA' CRACKS..
UM, LAST TIME YOU DISPLAYED BRUTE FORCE, YOU BLEW OUT TWO CONDENSERS IN, YOU-KNOW-WHERE..
FARKFOOT HERE!! TO DO DA FIRE SIGNAL... APOLLO IS ON DA' TARGET & CLOSING!! STAND READY!!
REEFER GUNS, FIRE!!
BOOM!
HEY!! HEY YOUSE GUYS!! I JUST SAW A WHOLE PACK OF MOON SATELLITES GO SHOOTIN' BY!!
OH MAN.. TOO MUCH.. JUST SHUTUPAN SIT DOWN...

Continued Next Issue

RRRRR
RRING


MANIPULATIO
a magazine for young chil
Roy
Jolly

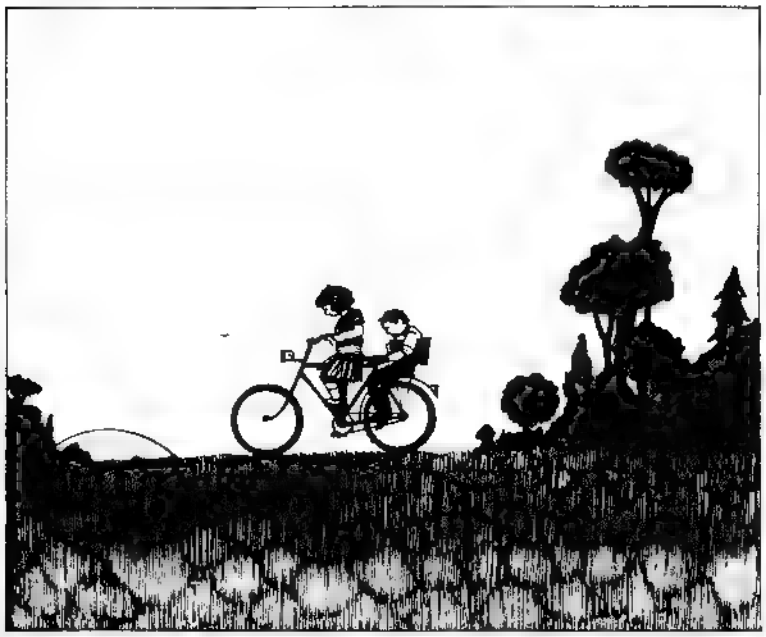


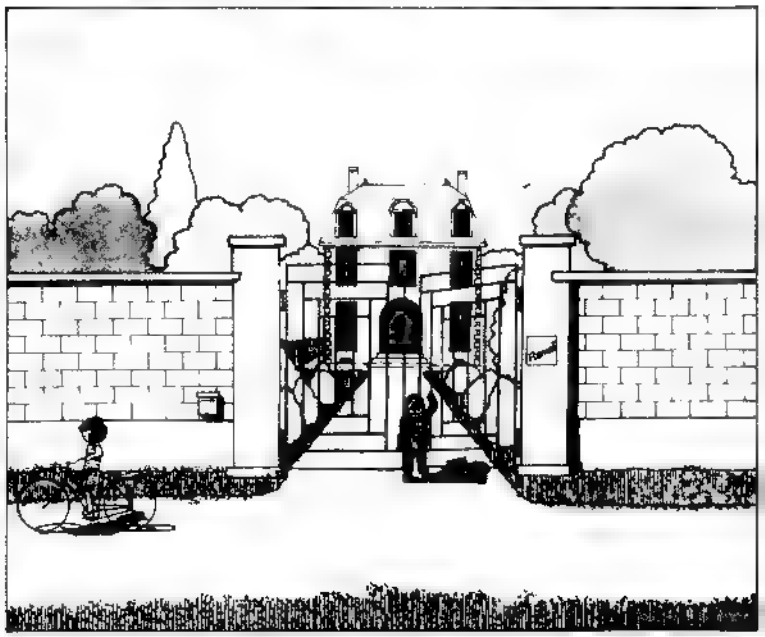


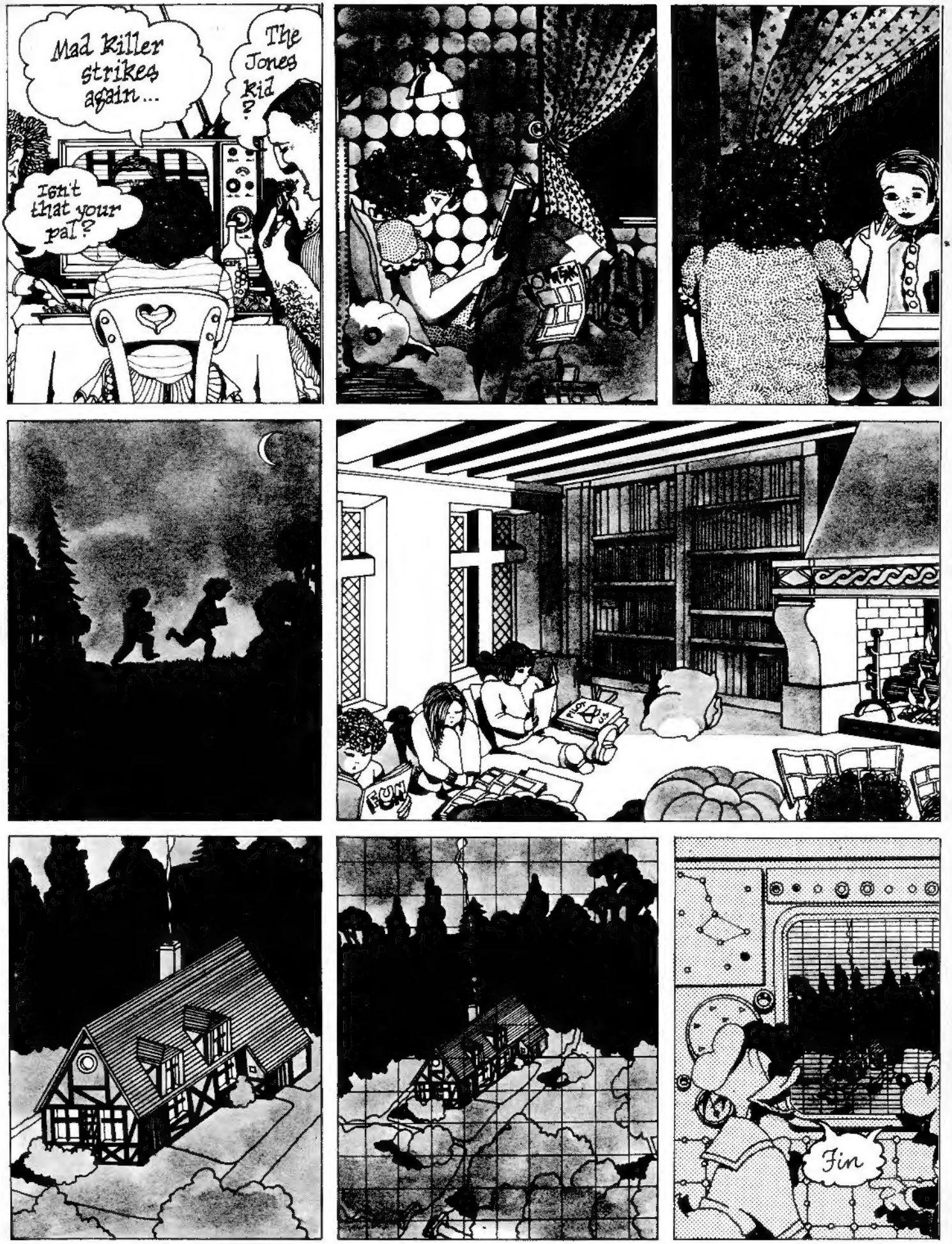
V.I.C.

JUMBO
COMIX

Homicidal maniac at large
ALEX NORTH
PARTNERS
SHOCKWAVE
RVEZ






Mad killer strikes again...
The Jones kid?
Isn't that your pal?
FUN
Fin

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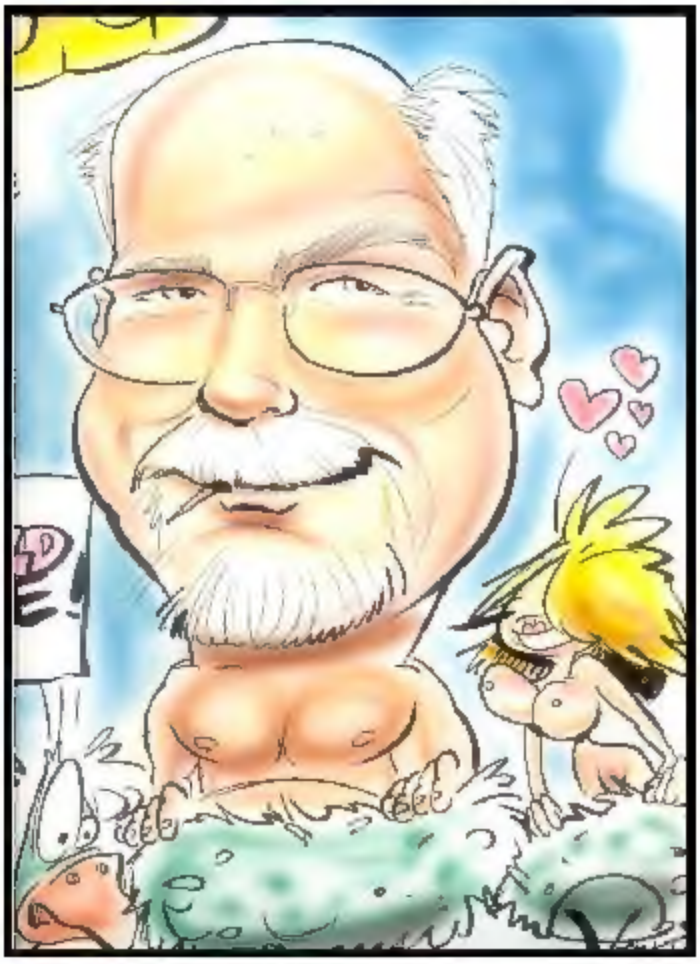

HEAVY METAL
APRIL, 1977
PREMIER ISSUE

ANOTHER FINE SCAN BY WHYLD GOOSE JANUARY 29, 2003

FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

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